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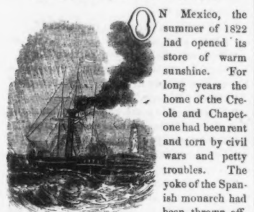
THE WANDERING GUERRILLA: —OR, THE— INFANT BRIDE OF TRUXILLO.

A Mexican Romance of Troublous Times.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER I.

THE MESTIZO AND THE GUERRILLA.



THE MESTIZO AND THE GUERRILLA.

N Mexico, the summer of 1822 had opened its store of warm sunshine. For long years the home of the Creole and Chapeone had been torn by civil wars and petty troubles. The yoke of the Spanish monarch had been thrown off, but the liberty which the people had looked for came not to bless them. Augustin Iturbide was now the emperor. He had at first only been president, but his ambition aimed at something higher, and having gained the voice of a vitiated, licentious soldiery upon his side, he stepped upon the necks of the people, and placed the imperial diadem upon his brow. His sway over the nation had become absolute, and the oppressed subjects found that they had gained nothing by their change of rulers; but, on the contrary, that they had rather lost.

But Iturbide's throne stood on the brink of a precipice. A few short months had he won the imperial robes, and he found that they sat not easily upon his shoulders as he had fondly hoped. There were noble spirits still left in Mexico, and the standard of revolt was not long in showing itself. The people, used to strife and change, gladly joined with the few bold patriots who began to whisper of new strife, and ere the half of a year had rolled over his imperial head, Iturbide knew that his throne was trembling. He grew no better. He still ground his heel upon the necks of all those who came within his reach, and to his officers and abettors he gave the most disgraceful license. The prison doors were continually creaking upon their hinges, and some of Mexico's best friends were chained within the damp dungeons. Augustin I. was striving to crush the power that opposed him, for he would keep the bubble he had gained.

It was early in the afternoon of a warm, pleasant summer's day that a horse stood upon the edge of one of those level tables of land that are stretched out among the mountains of Vera Cruz. The horse was a powerful animal of a gray color, and upon his back he bore a rider. This rider was a man who could not have been far from forty years of age, and his complexion and the form of his features, indicated him to be of the Mestizo blood. He was tall and athletic, and though not massive in his build, yet an observer could have seen that where his garments fitted tightly the flesh was hard and muscular. Especially could this be seen in his arms and legs, and then his shoulders were very thick, even to a slight humping of the back. This lump was by no means a deformity, for its very shape plainly indicated that it was necessary for the containing of the surplus muscle which lay about the breast and shoulders. The hands, which were unusually large, looked hard and iron-like. His dress was of costly fabric, but very plain—his jacket and trousers being of green silk velvet, without any other trimming than a narrow tape of gold which adorned the outside seam of the latter. Upon his head he wore a broad sombrero, and by his side he carried a long, heavy sword.

Upon first sight our new acquaintance was by no means prepossessing, for his features were cold and angular, and then the long, curling moustache helped to give an almost sinister expression to his face. But upon closer examination he might appear differently—for he betrayed a certain calm, dignified bearing that could not have belonged to a dishonest man.

The Mestizo had stopped his horse at a point where the table abruptly terminated, and where quite a steep slope swept away down to a thick wood of stout oaks. A wide horse-path led up through this wood, and up that path two horse-

men were coming. The foremost one was superbly dressed, and the nature of his uniform betokened him to be a colonel of the imperial staff. He was a stout, well-made man, about forty years of age, but, despite his gaudy dress and his martial bearing, he had an aspect at once repulsive and forbidding. His face was dark, his nose thick and large, his lips curling and sarcastic, his eyes deep-set and restless, and his brow low and contracted. Yet he rode with a confident, important air, and his cloak, heavily fringed with gold lace, was thrown carelessly up over his shoulders, leaving his arms and the lower part of his body free.

The second horseman was only a common soldier, and followed his leader in the capacity of an humble servant. Yet he seemed to be a shrewd fellow, with plenty of wit and daring, unencumbered by troublesome ideas of truth and morality. In fact, both master and man might safely be placed in the last category, if one might judge from their looks.

It was evidently for these people that the Mestizo had stopped, for he watched them narrowly as they ascended the hill-side, and he even swung his heavy sword clear of the saddle trappings so that he might grasp it readily in case of need.

"Saint Jago!" exclaimed the first horseman, as he stopped his panting steed upon the edge of the table land, "this is a long hill, and hard to climb."

"Yes," said the Mestizo, to whom the remark seemed to have been made, "the way is hard, for the path winds around many rocks and ravines."

"In faith it does," returned the first speaker.

"It is nothing but wind, wind, wind,—first over a rock—then around a rock—then through a ravine—and then around one, and then up a crag that fairly crumbles beneath the hoof. Why should a sensible man live up in such a place?"

"Because it is so beautiful when once you're up, I suppose," said the Mestizo.

"Very likely. 'Tis a goodly country up here—cool and pleasant, and luxurious, too."

The officer looked about upon the surrounding landscape as he spoke, and having viewed the scenery, he turned again to the Mestizo.

"Do you live about here?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And know you where Don Miguel Truxillo lives?"

"Yes," replied the Mestizo, pointing off to the westward with his finger, "that is his dwelling. You can see the broad plaza through the trees."

[SEE ENGRAVING.]

The officer looked in the direction pointed out, and a look of satisfaction came over his features as he saw how near he was to the place. But the Mestizo regarded him with a keen, scrutinizing look, and it was evident that his thoughts were not of the most pleasing character.

"Do you know anything of Truxillo's family?" asked the officer, throwing his cloak back from his shoulders, and thereby exposing the insignia of a cavalry colonel.

Something, was the Mestizo's reply.

"I think there is a fair senorita lives beneath his roof?"

"His grandchild lives with him."

"Ah—yes—it is she I mean. Think you I shall find Don Miguel at home?"

"Yes, I think you will."

"Then come along, Pedro," said the colonel, turning to his servant. "The distance is but short, and we'll soon find the whereabout to wet our dry lips and fill our empty stomachs."

Thus speaking, the colonel spurred up his beast, and his man followed his example. The Mestizo watched them as they departed, and he shook his head with a dubious expression as he saw them galloping off towards the noblemen's dwelling; but he did not gaze long, for his attention was soon attracted to another quarter.

Another horseman was coming up the hill, but he was totally unlike his predecessors, both in dress and personal appearance. He was a powerfully built man, of a noble, generous, frank

countenance, and dressed in a garb such as was worn by the patriot guerrillas of the times. He must have seen half a century of life, at least, for his hair was streaked with silver, and the hand of time had traced long furrows upon his brow. Yet he was straight and firm in his carriage, and he held his saddle like one who was used to it. As he drew near, the Mestizo regarded him with deep interest, and it was plain enough to be seen that he experienced a sort of strange awe as he gained a full view of the features of the coming horseman.

"Ah, Aldamar," said the new-comer, as he stopped his horse, "you seem to be standing watch here. Has any one passed you?"

"Yes," returned the Mestizo. "Those two men passed. You can see them yet if you look sharp."

He pointed toward the spot where the two horsemen were just disappearing among the shrubbery, and the guerrilla looked that way.

"Yes, yes—I see them," he said, while his dark eye flashed. "They passed me on the plain, and I thought their steps were bent this way. Do you know them?"

"No; but I do not like their looks."

"And you will like them less if ever you become acquainted with them."

"Then you know them?"

"Yes; I know the master, and of course the servant is of the same stamp, though perhaps on a smaller scale. I think you are faithful to the interests of Don Miguel."

"I am," replied the Mestizo, with a firm, compact utterance.

looking after, and I wish that you would so watch his movements that you can report them to me if I should desire to know them."

The Mestizo promised obedience, and the guerrilla was about to turn away when the other detained him.

"You must excuse me," said Aldamar, with some hesitation in his manner; "but there is one question I wish to ask you. You are a neighbor, and we most often, and yet I do not know your name."

The guerrilla smiled, but was silent.

"Would you have any objections to giving me the information?" continued the Mestizo.

"O, not in the least. You may call me Bo-

quilla; and if others ask you concerning me, you may tell them the same."

Aldamar looked sharply into his companion's face, and if he doubted the reality of the name he had heard, he did not say so. Of one thing he was assured—the guerrilla was a man who could mean no wrong, and in whom there could be no danger in placing the fullest confidence; but yet Aldamar was not satisfied.

"Is there anything else you would ask?" resumed the guerrilla, seeming to notice the Mestizo's inquisitive look.

"No," replied Aldamar; "nothing that I have any business to ask; only there are some people who have asked me who and what you were."

"And what did you tell them?"

"That I knew nothing about you."

"Then I hope you will mind the same answer when the same question is asked you again."

advanced in years, for he had counted more than three-score winters since his natal hour, and though he yet enjoyed the best of health, yet he was not so vigorous as some men are at that age. His hair was white, and his brow was deeply furrowed, yet his eyes were bright, and his mind was clear and sound. Strange as it may appear, he had managed to get along in life without being seriously disturbed by the numerous revolutions that had been going on about him. Though his sympathies were with the Republicans, yet he never became a partisan. He was naturally timid, and to save himself from trouble he had paid liberal tribute to whatever party or person happened to be in power. In his soul he hated Augustin Iturbide, but he had not the courage to make it known, so he paid his tax, and acknowledged Iturbide as the rightful emperor. From this we may see something of his natural disposition and character. Strictly honest, upright, truthful and affectionate, but with a timidity that sometimes almost unmanned him.

The old noble received Don Juan Calleja with the most flattering respect, and spent the remainder of the day and a part of the evening with him. Their business seemed to be of importance, and it must have been something somewhat startling, too, for Don Miguel might have been observed several times to even venture so far as to expostulate with the fire-eating colonel.

It was well into the night when Calleja retired, and Don Miguel was left alone in his study, for here it was that the old man spent most of his time when indoors,

and he had everything fitted up to suit his exact wishes. Here, amid his books and papers, he sat, leaning forward in his chair, with his elbows upon the edge of the table, and his brow resting upon the palms of his hands. He had been sitting thus some ten or fifteen minutes, when he was aroused by the entrance of some one, and he started up. It was a girl who had disturbed the old man's meditations—a dark-eyed, beautiful maiden, who had seen some nineteen years of life. She was of medium stature, with a complexion somewhat lighter than the majority of her country women, and as lovely as the angel which Hope sometimes paints for us. Every line of her features may not have been faultless in their symmetry, but it was an inward beauty which shone with the most effulgence. She was one of those persons who

grow more beautiful and lovely as we become acquainted with them—full of excellent points which are to be known and appreciated ere all the beauty is apparent.

Such was Isabel Truxillo. She was the only child of Don Miguel's only son. Her father had been killed twelve years before while fighting against the royalists, under the lead of Hidalgo, and since that time she had found a home with her kind old grandfather. Her mother she lost when she was only an infant, so that her grandfather was now the only near relative whom she had living. She was wealthy—very wealthy—for, independent of her grandfather's property, her father had left her the undivided heir to more than half a million of dollars.

"Ah, Isabel! are you up so late as this?" uttered Don Miguel, as he noticed the maiden.

"Yes," she replied, approaching her grandfather, and leaning over his chair. "I did not feel like sleep until I had seen you."

"You might have seen me in the morning, my child," said the old man, apparently very uneasy.

"O, I could not wait until morning. I could not sleep until I had seen you."

Don Miguel looked up into the maiden's face, but he did not speak, and in a moment more, Isabel resumed.

"I wished to ask you about the man who has been to see you this afternoon."

"He is here now, my child."

"I know it, and for that reason was I the more particular to see you this evening. Now tell me what that man is doing here."

"He has come on very important business," replied Don Miguel, with some hesitation.

"I know that," said Isabel, moving around



DON JUAN CALLEJA AND ALDAMAR THE MESTIZO.

"So I had thought," resumed the guerrilla; "and I think you may now have a chance to show your love. That man is Don Juan Calleja, and he is one of Iturbide's basest tools. Did you never hear of him?"

"Ay, I have heard the name," answered Aldamar, "and I fancied it was he as soon as he asked me the way to Don Miguel's house."

"Then let me advise you to watch him most narrowly. It may be possible that he means no harm, but I know that he is incapable of meaning anything good. If you love your old master be sure that Calleja does not escape your notice while he is about the premises; and you had better keep a watch, too, upon that servant of his, for I fancy his fingers are as light as his conscience is dull and easy. Just keep your eyes open, and Truxillo may have renewed occasion to bless you."

"I will do so," returned Aldamar, in a low, meditative tone; and as he spoke he regarded his interlocutor with a keen, inquisitive glance.

"Have you any idea what the fellow is after?" the guerrilla asked, after a short silence.

"Yes; I have my thoughts on the subject."

"What you tell them to me?"

"Certainly. I think he is after the lady Isabel."

"Ah!" uttered the questioner, with a prolonged emphasis; "that's the game, is it? I have seen a young senorita in Don Miguel's garden—a girl as beautiful as the blushing roses that grew about her. It is she, is it?"

"Yes."

"And is she rich?"

"Yes—very rich. She holds more than half a million of dollars in her own right."

"Then you may rest assured that he will need

These are troublous times in Mexico, and he only is safe who is either dishonest or unknown. No offence, I trust."

"O, not at all," said the Mestizo.

"We may meet again ere long, and in the meantime be sure that you keep an eye open upon the movements of Don Juan Calleja and his man."

As Boquilla thus spoke he turned his horse's head and started off towards the neighboring mountain. Aldamar watched him until he was out of sight, and then he turned his own horse towards the dwelling of Don Miguel, and as he rode slowly on towards home, he meditated upon what he had heard, and resolved to follow the instructions he had received.

CHAPTER II.

ISABEL.

SITUATED upon the brow of a gentle hill that arose from the wide table land was the dwelling of Don Miguel Truxillo. It was a magnificent spot for a comfortable home, and the extensive range of buildings was worthy of the place. Through the open spaces between the great trees in front of the buildings could be seen the wide plains of Vera Cruz, and away off in the distance, where the sky seemed to rest upon the edge of the earth, could be seen by the strong eye, in a clear day, the blue line of the great gulf. All that wealth could procure towards luxurious ease and comfort was manifest about the place, and the most excellent judgment, too, was displayed in the order and arrangement of things upon the premises.

Don Miguel was a Creole noble, and one of the wealthiest men in the country. He was well

and taking a chair by the side of her grandfather. "I know that his business must be important."

"So is it, my child, and when it is concluded you shall know all about it."

"Ah, but I would know now, for I think that it is business which concerns me. Is it not so?"

"Yes, Isabel,—it is," the old man replied, with an effort.

"Then of course I should understand it. That man is Don Juan Calleja, is he not?"

"Yes."

"And has he not come here to demand my hand in marriage?"

"The old man started, and moved uneasily in his chair."

"Answer me," the maiden continued. "If you love me, answer me truly, and without hesitation. Has not Calleja come to demand my hand?"

"He has, my child."

"And have you hesitated in your answer?"

"Don Miguel passed his arm around the fair girl's waist, and drew her upon his bosom. He was deeply affected, and he trembled violently."

"My sweet child," he said, in a low, tremulous tone, "I had but one answer to make. Don Juan has come to claim your hand, and from me he demands it."

"And you of course told him that he could not have it," uttered Isabel, keeping up her confidence with a strong effort.

"Ah, my dear child, I could tell him no such thing. It lays not in my power to refuse him the boon."

"Not in your power!" repeated Isabel, holding her breath with fear. "Not in your power!" she said again, gazing imploringly up into her grandfather's face.

"O, you do not mean so?"

"Alas! sweet one, it is even so. I cannot refuse him!"

Isabel started to her feet, and placed her hands upon the old man's shoulders. She remembered away back in the dim and dusky past, a scene that was not wholly won from her mind,—it was a scene where there were the fluttering of priestly robes, and the glittering of golden taper sticks and images. Her father was there, and so there was a dark form of whom she was reminded by Juan Calleja. She remembered that that dark face was turned upon her then, and that she received a kiss upon her forehead. She called it all back to her mind as she stood there with her hands upon her grandfather's shoulders, and it seemed a wild, fanciful scene, and she shuddered lest the worst she could imagine should be real.

"Alas! my sweet child," resumed the old man, "I fear your fate is fixed!"

"But tell me of it," uttered Isabel, striving to appear calm. "Let me know how the matter stands. Do not deceive me, for I would know all, even though the end were death itself!"

"Do you not know what transpired some twelve years ago?" asked Don Miguel, speaking more calmly.

"I have a dim recollection of a strange, dark scene," returned the maiden, with a cold shudder. "It was in a church—for I remember the great dark aisles, and the glittering altar, and the robed priest; but I cannot call fully to mind all the portrait. Tell me."

"I am glad you recollect even so much as that," said Truxillo, "for the rest will be easier to tell. You remember of course that your father was one of Hidalgo's firmest supporters. Don Juan Calleja, as well as him in the Republican cause. He was a major in your father's division. At the taking of Guanajuato, your father was wounded and taken prisoner, and the royal government of the city, Riano, had led him out to be shot, when Calleja came up with a company of his men and saved him. Calleja did this solely for the reward which he hoped to gain, as he afterwards confessed; but your father supposed it to be a deed of pure friendship, and he never would have done what he afterwards did. He would have rewarded the savior of his life in money, but he would have done nothing more. As it was, he looked upon Calleja as a noble friend, and he gave into his hands his dearest earthly treasure. You were at that time only seven years of age, and yet your father resolved that you should become Calleja's wife. The major was pleased with this, for it secured to him all your father's wealth, and as you even then gave promise of being a beautiful woman, it gave him the prospect of a lovely young wife."

"But there was one difficulty, and this Don Juan pointed out. If Isabel Truxillo should chance to die before arriving at the age of maturity, he would lose the wealth that was promised him. Your father resolved even to obviate that difficulty. He was impulsive and generous, and he did not stop to consider the magnitude of the deed he was about to do. He felt himself to be under the deepest obligations to Don Juan, and he also believed that man to be at that time pure and good. He might have known better if he had only taken time to consider; but he did not do such things; he allowed his first super-genius impulse to govern him, and you were sent for. In the cathedral of Guanajuato you were pledged to Don Juan by the solemn rites of the church. You were so pledged that he became the sole master of your property on your father's death. This was all done and recorded in the archives of the church, and I know not what power, save death, can undo what was thus done."

Isabel Truxillo sat back in her chair, and buried her face in her hands. She did not weep, but seemed rather to be stunned by what she had heard. It produced for the time a sort of deadening indifference, and her energies were all hushed. But at length she gazed up into her grandfather's face, and in a tone very low, but perfectly calm, she asked:

"Am I then, Don Juan Calleja's wife?"

"Not exactly his wife, but yet bound to him as such. By the laws under which the contract was made you are his affianced bride, and the contract can only be broken by the mutual consent of both parties. It was a sacred oath, made

by both, and nothing can be more binding."

"But I made no oath," whispered Isabel, mechanically.

"No; but your father did, and he was your legal representative."

"And I have not known of this before."

"I have not mentioned it, my child, because I had hoped that Don Juan would never come to claim you. He has been engaged in all the civil broils that have occurred, and part of the time he has been a fugitive, hidden from the viceroys among the rough passes of the Cordilleras. I have hoped that some chance bullet or lance would find his life; but I have hoped in vain. He has joined with Juarez, and he is now one of that tyrant's firmest supporters. He has reached a position of power and influence, and now he has come to his wife."

"And so you think he will take me if I object?"

"Yes. I knew what would be your wish, for I knew the nature of the man, and I asked him to leave you free; but he will not do it."

"If my fortune is his, let him take it. Perhaps he will take the money, and let me go."

"No, my Isabel," said the old man, with a sad shake of the head, "I asked him to do that, but he will not consent to it. It is the wife he wants."

"And my father has left me to such a fate! But O, there must be some means of escape! The same laws may not be in force now, since the government has changed."

"Ah, my child, that is an ecclesiastical law, and has not been changed; and then at this present time Don Juan has the emperor on his side."

"And Calleja will see me on the morrow?"

"Yes."

Isabel Truxillo arose from her chair, and walked slowly towards the door. Once she turned and looked towards her grandfather. The rays of the great hanging lamp shone full upon her face, and the old man started as he saw how strangely she looked. She seemed more like some statue of alabaster, clothed in silken robes, than she did like a human being. Her large dark eyes looked deep and lustrous, and yet there was a strangeness about them that almost struck the beholder with awe. Her hands were folded upon her bosom, and her long dark curls swept back upon her white shoulders in a wild, uncontrolled mass. She gazed for a moment upon the aged man, but she did not speak. Once her lips opened, but they were silently closed again, and then she turned and left the room.

The maiden sought her own chamber, and having knelt before the small golden crucifix that stood upon a marble pedestal in one corner of the room, she prayed to God and the holy mother for counsel and assistance. No tears had yet been shed, nor had she groaned or murmured over her fate. She was by nature a calm, bold girl, with a heart as strong and brave as it was true and faithful. She knew that she was bound by earthly laws to a hard, cruel fate, and now that she had reflected calmly upon it, she knew that it would require some powerful exertion to free herself of the yoke. There was only one source of hope left—she had not yet spoken with Don Juan. Perhaps she could persuade him to give her up. Her young heart's hopes were not yet all gone—it did not seem possible that she was to be so utterly crushed—and she allowed herself to hold the thread of hope still before her. She was capable of strong resolution in time of need.

CHAPTER III.

CLOUDS.

On the morning following the interview between Don Miguel and his grandchild, the latter arose early and walked out into the wide garden back of the buildings, and by her side walked her maid—a young Creole, named Inez. The latter was a bright-eyed, small girl, not more than seventeen years of age, and in her countenance she betrayed a vast deal of shrewdness and ready wit. She was most ardently attached to her fair mistress, and she would have even laid down life itself in her behalf. She had learned it through her own quickness of observation, and she was now thinking of it.

"Isabel," she said, looking up into the pale face of her mistress, and speaking almost in a whisper, "does Francisco know anything of Calleja's claim?"

"Francisco!" uttered the maiden, starting suddenly, and blushing till the rich blood mounted to her very temples.

"Ay," returned Inez, without seeming to notice her mistress's manner. "Does he know anything of this strange claim which Calleja has upon your hand?"

"And what if he did?" asked Isabel, trembling violently, and dropping her eyes.

"Why," said the girl, looking at first a little surprised, but instantly showing a gleam of intelligence, "you know how deeply interested he must be in this thing."

"Interested!—he interested?"

"Yes. Francisco Moreno, I mean."

Isabel raised her eyes to her companion's face, and after a few moments of thoughtful silence, she said:

"What do you mean, Inez?"

"Ah, my dear lady," replied the girl, shaking her head slowly and expressively, "I am not blind. I know that Francisco loves you even as he loves his own soul, and if you do not love him in return, then I have judged you most falsely. But I know that I am not mistaken. You do love the young man."

Isabel's eyes again dropped, and she trembled more than before. Then she stopped in her walk and laid her head upon her companion's shoulder, and the warm tears rolled down her cheeks. They were the first tears she had shed,

for now her heart was touched where all its stores of hopes were laid.

"Inez," she murmured, "you have guessed the truth; but mention it not. Francisco knows nothing of it. O, how shall I tell him the terrible truth?"

"You have not seen Don Juan yet," suggested the girl.

"True, but I fear he will not lend."

"Then tell it all to Francisco, and seek his aid," continued Inez, with a tone and look of assurance. "Perhaps you may find help in him. He is—"

The girl's remark was cut short by the appearance of a servant, who announced to Isabel that she was wanted in the house.

"Remember," whispered Inez, as her mistress turned away to obey the summons, "you have friends."

Isabel smiled a faint return of gratitude, and then moved towards the house. In the hall she found her grandfather, where he was pacing up and down with uneasy, nervous strides. He took the maiden by the hand as she entered his presence, and in a low, encouraging tone, he said:

"My dear child, Don Juan Calleja wishes to see you. He seems to be cheerful this morning, and I hope you will find him really a better man than we have been led to believe him. Remember, too, that it is your father's wish, and let this strengthen you."

"One question before I see him," murmured the fair girl, in a sort of choking tone. "Does Don Juan mean to take me with him now?"

"No. He only has come to assure himself that the boon is his."

"Then he will go away and leave me here yet a while longer."

"Yes—he will propose."

Isabel seemed much relieved, and having received a kiss from her aged guardian she turned towards the door that led to the principal drawing-room. The old man laid the way, and in a moment more the maiden found herself in Don Juan's presence. Truxillo introduced her, and then withdrew.

For a short time, Isabel remained standing there in the centre of the floor. She dared not raise her eyes,—or she did not raise them,—for a whirl of wild, overpowering emotions were possessing her. She knew that she was in the presence of the man who had so suddenly come across her life-path, but she could not yet summon the resolution to look him in the face. At length she heard a light, cautious footfall—it approached her—there was a warm breath upon her cheek, and when she began to shudder a hand was laid upon her arm, and her name was pronounced. It was a low voice that spoke, but it sounded harsh and constrained. She raised her eyes, and found the gaze of Don Juan fixed upon her. It was with the utmost exercise of her self-control that she refrained from crying out when she beheld the face of her companion. It was so coarse—so dark—so sinister in its expression—it was so cold of heart, and yet so glaring of passion. Those curling lips, that thick nose, those deep-set gleaming eyes, that broad, overhanging brow,—they all spoke plain of the man. Isabel shuddered, and while she shuddered, she sank into a seat.

"Fair senorita," commenced Don Juan, so struck with the marvellous beauty of the maiden that he had not noticed her peculiar manner, "I suppose your grandfathers have told me of my coming, and why I have come."

"Yes, senor," she replied.

"And from what he has told me I am led to judge that you were not fully acquainted with all the circumstances of our peculiar union."

"No, senor,—indeed I was not," uttered Isabel, with considerable decision.

"But you must have remembered something of it—did you not?"

"Yes; I had a faint recollection of the scene, but I had lost its import."

"Your grandfather should have kept you in mind of it. In that respect he has been most negligent. But perhaps it matters not now, for he assures me that you have not fixed your affections upon any one else."

Isabel turned pale at these words, and the tremor that shook her frame was so apparent that Don Juan noticed it, and a quick flush—a dark, cloudy emotion—passed over his features.

"Did he not speak to me the truth?" he asked, in a hoarse, tremulous whisper.

Poor Isabel!—she knew not how to answer. She did not even wish to speak falsehood to the man before her, and yet for the moment she feared to speak the truth. The thought that she might bring down some vengeance upon the head of her old grandfather, should she confess the truth, at first withheld her, for she knew that Calleja was capable of dark doings—she could read it in every lineament of his features. But then, again, perhaps if she were to confess all, the dark man might release her. He might not want a wife whose strongest love was elsewhere centered.

"Did Don Miguel speak to me the truth?" asked Calleja, a second time.

"He spoke what he believed to be the truth," returned Isabel, starting at the terrible force of the man's voice.

"Ah! and are there scenes behind the curtain which he knows not of? Speak plainly, lady, for I must know all."

For the moment, Isabel felt like renegeing the cool freedom of her companion—the peremptory manner of his speech cut her to the soul, and her proud spirit rebelled; but she had judgment as well as courage and pride, and she knew that her own good demanded that she should be subordinate to the present.

"I have no desire to deceive you, senor," she said, "for I have done nothing that I deemed odd of the way, or that I could have well avoided, and I must tell you plainly that if I ever become your wife it will be without a heart to give you."

Don Juan started up from his chair; but he sat quietly back again, and while a dark smile worked upon his features, he said:

"I am sorry for that; but you will be the

greatest sufferer. You are even now, to all intents and purposes, my wife, and you must be aware of what will be your situation when your husband knows that he possesses not your whole heart; but perhaps this will wear off. Who is it that has gained your love?"

This was a question which Isabel had been expecting, and she was prepared to answer it.

"You must not know him if I was to tell you his name."

"O, perhaps I should. What is it?"

"Senor, perhaps he can be nothing more to me now, and if I must learn to forget him, I must commence now by not mentioning his name."

"Then you refuse to tell it to me?"

"I did not think you would press it upon me."

Calleja bit his fingers with anger and vexation, for he could read human character well enough to see that the maiden was not to be forced or urged into divulging a secret that she wished to keep, so he resolved to let that part of the subject drop for the present, hoping that at some future time he might learn all that he wished to know.

"Well," he said, with ill-concealed chagrin, "you may keep his name to yourself if you choose, but I shall turn to your honor that you will not see him again, for you must be aware of the impropriety of such a course. I have come here now to prepare the way for our nuptials, and as soon as practicable I wish them to take place."

"Don Juan Calleja," spoke Isabel, summing up all her fortitude, "when my old grandfather told me last night of the object of your visit, I could hardly credit the evidence of my own senses; but I soon realized the full force of the event. Yet I had one hope left of future happiness. With regard to yourself, personally, I know comparatively nothing. You might make for me one of the best of husbands; but you know that the heart's affections are not often at our own disposal—they cannot be bestowed where we will. I may respect you as a man, but I could not love you as a husband. I had entertained the hope, under these considerations, that you would release me from the bond by which I am bound."

"You need not burden your mind with any such thoughts," replied the colonel, with a bitter tone. "You need not ever hint at the idea again, for I have no thoughts of giving you up. It needs but a very simple ceremony to make us man and wife, and that ceremony must take place as soon as possible. I have a mission to perform in the city of Guadalupe, and I shall not return for a month. At the end of that time I shall come for you. Why, my fair lady," continued Calleja, in a softer and more pleasant tone, "the very thought of such a thing should make you joyful. As my wife, you will at once take the lead of the social company at the capital, and you will be known only to be loved and respected. Do you realize all this?"

Isabel was to have a moment's respite, and she felt that it would be better for her not to make Calleja angry now if she could avoid it. Within her thought, Calleja went on and pictured out her redemption, and she resolved to so conduct at present that he should have no more cause for apprehension, so she calmly replied:

"I suppose it would be as you say."

"And would not such a state please you?" he asked.

"Ah, senor, I have always been used to the quiet retirement of the country, and I love it the best; but were my home in the city, perhaps I should soon become attached to it."

"O, I am sure you would—I am sure you would; and then I shall give you such a splendid home."

Isabel thought of her own half million of dollars, and of how much that would have to do towards maintaining the home of which Don Juan spoke; but she did not give expression to her thoughts. Calleja went on and pictured out the beauties of the great city, and the joys that were to be found in the life at court; but the maiden only listened to them as the child listens to the howl of the wolf—remaining quiet for fear of disturbing the brute, and yet longing for the opportunity of escape.

And so Isabel sat there and heard Don Juan talk, and that she evinced no enthusiasm, yet she was not here of her own free will. He gained from her no promise,—he did not ask for any,—but he placed rigid injunctions upon her, and though he made no direct threats, yet he plainly intimated that he was able and ready to punish any infringement of his orders. It came hard upon Isabel, for she understood well the hints he gave, and he hesitated not to show the full authority with which he was invested. His common soldiers he treated more like brutes than like human beings, and he was not very far from carrying the same mode of treatment to all who were under him. It seemed to be his nature, and he did not know any better.

At length he signified to the maiden that the interview was concluded, and with a hopeful emotion she arose from her chair.

"Only one word more," said Calleja, also arising.

He approached the fair girl as he spoke, and placed his stout arm about her neck, and on the next instant he had imprinted a kiss upon her cheek. She uttered a low, quick cry, and darted from his hold.

"Did it frighten you?" he said, with a flashing eye.

"I knew—I knew not what you meant to do," stammered Isabel, not wishing to offend the man now; but she could not have helped the shudder nor the cry when she received that stinging kiss, for it was like the touch of a serpent.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Don Juan, as he moved back and gazed upon the fair maiden, "you are not used to that sort of thing; but I meant you no harm, I assure you, only you need follow up the lesson by practice with others while I am gone."

Isabel's eyes flashed, and her proud heart leaped painfully in her bosom; but she did not trust herself to reply.

"Now remember," resumed Don Juan, "you

have a month to yourself, and at the end of that time I shall return to claim you. I hope you will use that term in preparing yourself for the station you are to fill. Your own sense must teach you what is to be done to that end, so I shall leave the matter with you."

Once more Isabel Truxillo was back in her own chamber. She sat down by the window, and tried to think of what had passed; but she could not think calmly. The whole scene was but a sort of wild, dark passage to her mind, and she rather strove instinctively to shut it out. In a few short hours how the whole picture of her future had changed! While the sun of yesterday shone upon her she had been full of hopes and joys—as light and blissome as the feathered warblers that sang among the foliage at her window,—but now it was all gone. The change was as utter as it had been sudden and unexpected, and her life-plan was but a mere wreck of what it had been!

CHAPTER IV.

CONSPIRACY.

TOWARDS noon, Don Juan Calleja went out into the garden—a large enclosure back of the buildings, comprising a number of acres of land, which was set off most tastefully into flower-beds and fruit grounds. Every fruit that the climate would bear was cultivated here, and many were the exotics that required more than ordinary care. The vines, with their full clusters of red, black and purple grapes, were trailed over willow arbors, and small fountains played here and there with their sparkling, cooling jets. In the extremity of this place, Don Juan found his follower, Pedro Reyna. The fellow had been stuffing himself with half-pipe grapes, but he stopped when he saw his master.

"Well, Pedro," said Don Juan, looking carefully about, as though he would be sure there were no listeners, "how have you passed your time?"

"Well, my master—well," returned the man, throwing away a grape-stem as he spoke, and then wiping his mouth.

"And have you learned anything of importance?"

"Perhaps so."

"And have you excited no suspicions?"

"I let alone for that."

"By Saint Jago, I have you learned!"

"Why, I have just found out that the old Don has no near relative living except the senorita."

"Isabel, you mean."

"Exactly. She's the only bit of humanity that clings to his money-bags except himself."

"You are sure you learned truly?"

"No mistake, my master."

"Whom have you spoken with?"

"The very thought of such a thing should make you joyful. As my wife, you will at once take the lead of the social company at the capital, and you will be known only to be loved and respected. Do you realize all this?"

Isabel was to have a moment's respite, and she felt that it would be better for her not to make Calleja angry now if she could avoid it. Within her thought, Calleja went on and pictured out her redemption, and she resolved to so conduct at present that he should have no more cause for apprehension, so she calmly replied:

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Isabel Truxillo sat back in her chair, and buried her face in her hands. She did not weep, but seemed rather to be stunned by what she had heard. It produced for the time a sort of deadening indifference, and her energies were all hushed. But at length she gazed up into her grandfather's face, and in a tone very low, but perfectly calm, she asked:

"Am I then, Don Juan Calleja's wife?"

"Not exactly his wife, but yet bound to him as such. By the laws under which the contract was made you are his affianced bride, and the contract can only be broken by the mutual consent of both parties. It was a sacred oath, made

by both, and nothing can be more binding."</

"By Saint Jago!" exclaimed Calleja, grasping his follower by the arm, "I understand you now, and we will talk more of this matter; but not now—here. We will think of it well. By the holy head of Santa Maria! I remember me now that the old man did show some such signs as you speak of, and they moved slightly in my fancy, but I gave them not such form and substance as you have done. But we will speak no more of it. We must haste away, for my business at Guadalajara must be done, and after that we will think."

As Don Juan spoke he turned towards the building, and Pedro followed him. After they were fairly gone and out of sight, a man stepped out from behind a thick of rose-trees that grew close at hand. It was the very person whom we first saw upon the edge of the steps—Aldamar's name, and he was Don Miguel Truxillo's lieutenant. He was at the head of the old man's affairs, and had charge of all that pertained to the defence of the property and place. Aldamar stood for some time after he had come from his place of concealment, and gazed off towards the point where the two men had disappeared. He had profited by the advice of the guerrilla, and had kept one of the two men under his immediate surveillance since they had been at the place, and now he was rewarded for his pains, for he knew that the villains were moving towards a plan for taking Don Miguel's life.

At first the lieutenant thought of hastening at once to his master and revealing all that he had heard, but upon more mature deliberation he concluded to keep the affair to himself, as he thought that by so doing he might be more sure of thwarting the plan. When Don Juan and his servant came again, he could watch them narrowly, and then, if there was occasion, he could place the old man upon his guard. At any rate, he was in possession of what he deemed a most important secret, and he supposed he should have time to ponder upon it and lay out some good plan of action; but for the present he was resolved to keep it to himself, because by so doing he could hold the management of the affair and not be fearful of having the two plotters learn of the discovery of their plan.

Aldamar was upon the point of turning towards the dwelling, when he was arrested by the sound of approaching footsteps, and at the end of a few moments, he saw the guerrilla, Boquilla, coming towards him. The lieutenant had no fear of that man now, though he had entertained some vague doubts concerning him. Very few people in the neighborhood knew anything at all of the strange guerrilla, and the hunters and Indians among the mountains only knew him as a wandering man, who feared nothing so much as dishonor, and who sought few acquaintances or friendships. Once the brigands had attacked a small hamlet where he was stopping, and after a few moments' conversation with the leader, he persuaded them to leave the place unharmed. From this circumstance he was judged by some to be a sort of generalissimo of the brigands; but to him who could read human nature at a glance from the most expressive features, he had no such appearance, though they were forced to admit that over many of the most powerful bands of marauders he held a strange control.

"Aldamar," said the guerrilla, smiling as he spoke, "you see I have taken the liberty to enter your grounds without permission; but the object of my visit must be my excuse."

"No excuse is needed, señor," quickly returned the lieutenant. "Our grounds are open to all honest people."

"And dishonest people will come in when they please," said Boquilla, with a light laugh.

"But," he added, assuming at once a serious countenance, "I have come to learn something of our good friend, Don Juan Calleja. Is he here now?"

"Yes; but he will leave very soon."

"How soon?"

"Perhaps in an hour."

"Ah—so soon as that. Then he goes at once to Mexico?"

"No. I understand he goes to Guadalajara."

"Direct from here?"

"Yes."

"And starts in an hour?"

"I think so."

"Then I must be moving. But will you tell me what his visit has amounted to here?"

"I cannot tell you exactly. All I know is that he has some claim upon the hand of Isabel Truxillo, and he has come to secure it."

"Ah—yes—I know well his claim, and it is a most powerful one. Then he insists upon it, does he?"

"Yes—most strenuously."

"And I suppose Don Miguel would give in to him?"

"I do not think the old man could help himself, even if he desired to do differently."

"Perhaps he could not," returned the guerrilla; and then after a few moments of thought, he added: "But Don Juan is not just the man for such a place, though he has every legal claim upon it. Have you noticed anything else—anything that looked suspicious?"

Aldamar thought of the conversation he had just heard between Don Juan and Pedro; and that he thought it still best to keep to himself, so he replied in the negative.

"I hope you will not hesitate to trust me," returned Boquilla, "for I assure you that every act of mine in the premises will be against the villainous Calleja."

"If I had anything to impart—anything that I wished to impart to any one—I do not know but that I should tell him to you as quickly as any one else; but I have nothing now."

"Very well," said the guerrilla; "but," he continued, with an admonitory shake of the head, "beware of both those fellows. I know you have something on your mind which you will not tell, for I can read it in your face; but be careful, that's all. I shall see you again."

Thus speaking, the guerrilla turned and moved quickly away, and the lieutenant again watched his receding form in blank surprise. The last words he had heard put some strange thoughts into his mind.

CHAPTER V. FRANCISCO MORENO.

Just as the sun was setting on the evening of the day on which Don Juan left the dwelling of Don Miguel, a young man rode up the hill through the deep wood, and entered upon the same spot where we first saw the lieutenant and guerrilla. He was somewhere about six-and-twenty years of age, tall and well formed, and possessing a frame far more than ordinary muscular power. His hair was black, and hung in short, clustered curls about his head; and his eyes were also black, and large, and full. His countenance was eminently handsome—not so much for its purely classic mould or faultless outline, as for its genial, glowing, ever-speaking goodness. It was one of those faces that serve as type indexes to the soul, and upon which smiles look so blooming and happy. He was just such a one, as the true man would seek for a social companion, and in whom the true woman would delight to trust. His dress was of no particular order, though it came nearer to the garb of a guerrilla officer than aught else. He was well armed, and his horse was stout, firmly built, and powerful.

The young horseman's eyes sparkled as they rested upon the distant walls of Truxillo's dwelling, and after he had allowed his beast to stand awhile and breathe, he set forward at a good pace. When he reached the wide lawn in front of the house, he dismounted and led his horse to the stable, where he found a groom to take him. The servants all knew him, for they not only bowed as he passed them, but they smiled as though they were happy at being recognized by him.

While he is going towards the wide plaza we may as well catch the opportunity to introduce him. His name was Francisco Moreno. His father had been once a general in the Mexican army, and when Hidalgo arose against the royal power, General Moreno was among the first to join him, and at the storming of Guanajuato he was killed. Since that time Francisco had lived mostly at the capital, but on the breaking out of the revolution he had refused to lend his sword and voice in support, and to save his life he had been obliged to flee. With Isabel Truxillo he had been acquainted from the days of his childhood, for her father and his father had been most intimate friends, and the acquaintance and friendship of the children was never broken. Don Miguel loved Francisco almost as an own child, and he was always happy to have him come and visit him; but there was one mistake under which the old man seemed to labor. He had seen Francisco in infancy, and had been acquainted with him ever since, and had never failed to treat him as a child,—he did not even now seem to realize that the child of the past had grown to be a man. He even talked of the youthful pair as if they were still the same, and when he felt in the mood, he would sit and tell them stories, and he never noticed that they often paid far more attention to each other than they did to him. In fact, the old man was blind. He prided himself on his excessive ability to see minute matters with wonderful precision and shrewdness, but he was the only one who had yet been brought to believe it. He was a kind-hearted, timid, self-love old man, but he could love others as well as he did himself.

Don Miguel was seated upon the piazza when Francisco came up, and with a bright smile, he arose to greet him.

"Ah, my dear, dear boy, how do you do?" exclaimed the old man, grasping the youth by the hand, and looking at him with a long, long while since I have seen you."

"It has been some time," returned Francisco, with a smile; "almost a whole week. What have you been doing the while?"

"Haven't it been over a week?" asked the old man, manifesting considerable surprise.

"No more, certainly. Do you not remember that I spent the last Sabbath with you?"

"O, yes—I remember—you were here then; but if I remember rightly, I saw but little of you that time. You and Isabel were roaming off all the while after flowers and birds' nests. Upon my soul, you are naughty children to do that and leave your grandfather alone. But don't get angry, Francisco, for I do not mean to scold or punish you, though you do sometimes richly deserve it."

"Remember I would know. Listen to me, Isabel. I know all. Your grandfather has told me the whole, and I know the claim which Juan Calleja has upon you. Don Miguel begged me to come to you, and try to smooth down the rough points of your agony. He hoped I might have influence over you, and that I could cheer you up amid your trials, and for that I have come."

"Then I beg that you will not try the experiment, for it would only serve to make me the more miserable. I know what fate mine!"

"Yes, Isabel, you will not refuse to answer my question. O, tell me if you did not love me as I have said."

"Yes, Francisco, I did; and now let it be forgotten. It is a happy, joyful emotion, and its continuance does me the greatest good; but I have said it only because it was a dream which is past and forgotten."

"No, no, Isabel—not so. I promised Don Miguel that I would do my utmost to make you contented, and I will do so. While I live you shall not wed with Don Juan! I know that the union would make you miserable, for he is a villain of the darkest dye."

Isabel started up as she heard these words, and a quick flash of hope passed over her face. But she soon relapsed into her former despondency, and in a sinking tone, she said:

"I know, Francisco, what a noble will you have; but you speak in the heat of passion. Don Juan Calleja is one of the most powerful men in the empire, and you are one of the weak. He is the emperor's chief man, and you are a poor refugee. Alas! you can do nothing."

"By my soul, Isabel, I do not speak hastily," impetuously replied the youth. "I know what

colomment thereby. By Saint Juan, he is a villain! But what has he to do with Isabel?"

"Have you never heard of the contract that was once made between them?"

"Contract! Between Isabel and him?" uttered Francisco, starting to his feet, and turning paler than before.

"Yes; I thought you knew of it," continued the old man, not suspecting the true cause of the youth's emotion.

"I have known nothing," returned Francisco. "Isabel never told me. I remember to have heard when I was a boy, of my son's having been in great danger, and that Don Juan saved his life; and I heard something more—I think it was about Don Juan's inheriting most of the man's property whom he had saved."

"Ah, my boy, that is not all. But sit you down by my side, here, and I will explain it all. Isabel knows not of it wholly. I had hoped Don Juan would never come to claim his legal right, and hence I never deemed it best to burden her with the facts."

After this the old man went on and related to the youth all the circumstances, as the reader already knows them. He did not seem to notice the fearful effects his words had upon his listener, and if he noticed anything he thought it was sympathy for the poor girl.

"Now, my poor Isabel," he continued, "you must help me. I think you have considerable influence over Isabel, and I wish you would see her and advise with her. You might possibly smooth the matter over so that she would not suffer so much. Will you not help me in this?"

"Yes, yes," quickly replied the young man, starting again to his feet. "By Saint Jago! I'll exert myself to the utmost to make her contented, even though it were to the giving up of my life! Where is she? Let me go to her at once. She shall not pass another night until I have spoken to her rights of comfort!"

"That's right, my noble boy," ejaculated Don Miguel, grasping Francisco by the hand. "You may go to her at once. You will find her in her own library. O, I hope you can smooth down the bed of her troubles for I know that she suffers. Francisco Moreno did not trust himself to speak further."

Isabel Truxillo was in one of the apartments which was allowed to her own use. Her books were there, her embroidery frames were there, and her music was there. She had already lighted her lamp, and was seated at a small organ. It was a mild, plaintive melody which she sang, and the words told of the giving up of her life! She sang it with a low, wailing voice, and she sang it with a heart that was broken. She had finished her song, and was running her fingers over the keys, when she heard a tap at her door. She quickly arose and opened it, and a low, bursting cry escaped from her lips as she recognized Francisco; but he sprang forward and caught her in his arms.

"Isabel—dearest Isabel," he exclaimed, "you would not turn from me. You would not avoid me."

"Alas! Francisco, you know not to whom you speak," murmured the fair girl, still struggling gently to free herself from her lover's embrace.

"Yes, yes," passionately replied the youth. "I speak to one whom I love as the very core of my soul!"

"O, Santa Maria!" ejaculated the maiden, giving over her struggles, and allowing her head to drop over her companion's shoulder. "The dream is passed. O, Francisco, the dream is passed!"

The youth led Isabel to a seat, and there, with his arm still about her neck, he imprinted a kiss upon her fair cheek. She started as she felt the quickening touch, and once more she would have moved from his side.

"Let me go," she murmured. "Our hopes of joy are all gone. For my own peace, and for yours as well, we must meet no more."

"One word, Isabel," said the young man; "one word is I release you. You must answer me, truly. Tell me if you ever loved me?"

"Francisco," returned the girl, raising her eyes to look reproachfully to his face, "you know I have loved you!"

"Ay, you a sister's love—for we loved in childhood. But have you loved me with no other love?—no deeper, no stronger, no purer love? Have you not loved me with that love which those few who unite their souls for life love?"

"Why should I not know. Listen to me, Isabel. I know all. Your grandfather has told me the whole, and I know the claim which Juan Calleja has upon you. Don Miguel begged me to come to you, and try to smooth down the rough points of your agony. He hoped I might have influence over you, and that I could cheer you up amid your trials, and for that I have come."

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I say, and I have full confidence in my power to protect you from Don Juan's claim. By all the saints above, you shall not be his wife while I live, and am at liberty! This is the way in which I would comfort you."

"O, Francisco, I wish I could hope as you speak!"

"And so you must hope. I do not depend upon my own power alone, for I have a friend who will help me. There is among the mountains, a strange man, named Boquilla. I know not whence he gains his power, but I know that he has it, and I know that he will help me. Say that you would be free from Don Juan's power, and it shall be done if I live and have my liberty."

"Most assuredly I would be free," replied the maiden.

"And your love would be all my own," whispered our hero, drawing her nearer to him.

"It is all your own now," murmured she; "and yours my heart must ever be, let my hand go where it will!"

"Then hope all you can. Let my mission from Don Miguel have its full effect. O, I can do; but I cannot live and see you another! From the earliest days of my childhood, even from mole-hills were mountains, and bubbling brooks were great rivers in my sight, have I loved you with the whole ardor of my soul. The past of duty has been a burden, and the love I bore you, and many a pious belief have I escaped through the memory I held of you. O, I cannot give it all up now!"

The maiden sank upon her lover's bosom and wept; but her tears were those of joy—for she had indeed found a new source of hope. There was something in his words and manner that gave her a good degree of assurance, and she allowed her heart once more to fall back upon its former hopes and aspirations.

"You will not deceive me," she murmured, as she clung fondly to her companion. "You will not raise hopes that can be easily crushed, for my heart would break under another shock."

"Fear not. I have set my life at stake, and I know you must be the forfeit. Your grandfather tells me that Don Juan will not be here again for a month, and that will give me ample time to arrange my plans."

Gradually Isabel's countenance brightened, and ere long the young couple were talking as they had talked in times gone by, save that now there was a certain air of restraint in their communion, for until that evening they had never so plainly avowed their loves. But yet they were free and happy, for the bright sunshine of love chased away the dark clouds of sorrow and sadness, and they seemed to have forgotten that there ever had been a cloud hovering over them. Francisco had truly kept the promise he made to Don Miguel, though whether in such a manner as the old man had expected, the reader can judge.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE HAPPY VILLAGE NAIDEN.

BY J. ALFORD.

How happy is the gentle village maid,
Who rich by nature, scarce superfluous aid;
Whom modest nature no rude gaze can pierce,
But still her soul, preserved its native fire;
Whom little store her well-taught mind does please,
Nor knows the want, nor dreads with wantous ease;
Free from those storms which on the nightly fall,
Though few her wishes, she enjoys them all.

No earthly care inhale her fair breast,
Save one, to her, the sweetest and the best;
Fond love for him whose image hovers night,
Who looks in bliss beneath her beaming eye.
Not one in whom a doubtful mind is shown,
But one whose heart is true to her own;
In bonds of faith, each with the other vie,
And while they live, that faith can never die.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

SKETCH FROM MY WINDOW.

BY LECT LINWOOD.

The day is dull and cheerless within, damp and uncomfortable without. As I seat myself at the window of my room, which is situated in the second story of a hotel, in Broadway, and cast my eye upon the world of confusion below, I find my attention instantly riveted upon the scene to which there appears to be no close, no escape. The endless train of vehicles, the ceaseless hurrying and fro of busy pedestrians, the crying of news-boys, etc., etc., form the living, never-ending drama of Broadway.

Notwithstanding the dull, drizzling rain, and the wretched condition of the streets, there is no decrease in the number of travellers, and no abatement in business; but all seem intent upon one, and only one object,—that of hurrying through the crowd. Police officers are stationed at all the principal crossings, for the purpose of preserving order and assisting people in passing from street to street with safety, amidst the tramping of horses, which are harnessed to every conceivable sort of vehicle. Omnibuses, with their double span; drays, drawn by a single horse, countless in number; hand-carts; express teams; bag-wagons, resembling great wagons covered with pictures of circus riders, show fights, placards of "Crystal Palace," "Hippodrome," names of hotels, business firms, etc., etc. A heterogeneous collection of curiosities, truly, is a view of Broadway in a rain storm.

Still, to a careful observer, how much of life may be learned by that single sight. Among the mass which crowds the streets, I see the splendid coaches, drawn by noble steeds, whose equipage alone would be considered a little fortune to some who are only allowed to look upon them as they pass. These convey the wealthy, the fortunate, the happy; if so that such appreciate their blessings. What matters it to them whether it rain or shine? They are provided for in all weather. They need not be exposed to the storm, or disappointed in their engagements on account of it.

What a contrast when I look from the street to the sidewalk, and note the shabby dress and the care-worn expression of many who seem to

be less fortunate. There are families, old and young, some carrying heavy burdens, and some sitting or standing at their out-of-door counters, slowly collecting a little change by the sale of their wares, books, fruits, or trinkets of one kind and another; and others hurrying through the mud to parake, perhaps, of a cold and scanty meal, and then hurry back to work, until the last glimmer of daylight has disappeared. So expressive are their countenances, it seems that one might read their life's history therein.

An object still more attractive than all the rest, is a little street beggar who is stationed upon the busy corner, watching her every opportunity to dart across the street between the passing vehicles and sweep the mud from the crossing for the convenience of foot passengers. She is literally clothed in rags, scanty at best, and the remnant of a thin shawl covers the back part of her head. Shoes and stockings, with her arms bare, to the shoulder, and purple with the cold, she braves the storm, and sticks by the post. Since I have watched her, at least one hundred men, warmly and expensively clad, have passed without proffering her a single cent. With an imploring look, that little red palm is extended to the passers-by, and without a complaint, as they heartlessly push her aside and rush past her, as if anxious to avoid meeting such a real object of charity.

Ah, there is a fine looking gentleman standing beside her, leading by the hand a sweet little girl. He surely cannot pass without dropping a trifle into that little cold hand. But he is looking the other way; he does not appear to see her. She steps forward in front of him, and by the movement of her lips, I perceive she says, "Please sir, a penny."

Heeds it not, the passage is clear for a moment, and he hastens across the street and is gone.

The day is far spent, and the little sewer lays down her broom to count the contents of her pocket. She holds it all in one hand, and the coin is all of a dark color. Small pay for a hard day's work surely. She has been very patient, but making no return to the little girl of safety in her tattered garment, she swiftly dashes a tear from her cheek with a brush of the hand. But that is all. She again resumes her task, and still hopes on.

The clouds thicken, the rain increases, and all seem to be apprised of the premature approach of night. The afternoon entertainments are closed, and there seems to be a general rush in the streets. A mass of vehicles have gathered in the crowd to go all in opposite directions, through the same channel, at the same moment. Such a yelling of teamsters, lashing of whips, ordering of police officers, and singing of the news-boys, who must always be heard above every other sound—surely, Boston could not present a greater scene of confusion, even were school just "let out."

There comes back the gentleman with the little girl. He attempts to cross the street. An unruly horse is capering in the midst of the crowd, and in his haste to avoid the danger of being trampled upon, his foot slips, he loses his hold on the child, and she has fallen under the feet of the furious beast! Every one is breathless with excitement! There seems but a hair's breadth between her and death! The father springs upon his feet as soon as possible. A dozen men are in the act of approaching her, but the horse's foot already trembles over her, prostrate form. One united shriek from the crowd, sends the air! A moment of painful suspense—while the poor little creature, with the fearlessness of a true hero, rushes through the crowd, seizes the child by its clothes and rescues it from its perilous situation! The air rings with shouts of applause! She places the child, unharmed, in the arms of its happy parent!

Now comes the day of rejoicing for the poor little sewer. Surely, that man can never pay her enough for such a service. She has jeopardized her own life to save the life of a child. What nobler deed can a mortal do! He is taking her by the hand and talking with her. Now he feels in his pocket. He takes out a single coin and offers her. Do my eyes deceive me? It is only a dime! She courtesies, he smiles on her, and hastens away.

The lookers-on are amazed. They look after him with indignation. Immediately a little crowd gathers around her, of those seemingly almost as poor as herself, and make up a little purse for her. She goes home with a light heart, but no thanks to him who owes her a debt that will remain charged against him until the great day of reckoning comes. If he goes home to happy reflections and pleasant dreams, he must possess more than a hardened heart—no less than all.

What ray can penetrate that heart where the fire of conscience has ceased to burn!

UTILITY OF TEA.

In the life of most persons a period arrives when the stomach no longer digests enough of the ordinary elements of food to make up for the natural body's waste, and the body becomes thin. The size and weight of the body, therefore, begins to diminish more or less noticeably. At this period tea comes in as a medicine to arrest the waste, to keep the body from falling away so fast, and thus enable the less energetic powers of digestion still to supply the solid tissues. No wonder, therefore, that tea should be such a favorite on the one hand, with the poor, whose supply of substantial food is scanty, and on the other with the aged and infirm, especially of the feeble sex, whose powers of digestion and whose bodily substance have together begun to fail. Nor is it surprising that the aged female, who has barely enough of vitality to enable her to do what are called the common necessities of life, should yet spend a portion of her small gains in searching her stores of tea. She is such a creature as well on common food when she takes her tea along with it; while she feels lighter, at the same time more cheerful, and more energetic, because of the indulgence.—*Chemistry of Common Life.*

BOOKS.—The question is often asked "What becomes of all the books daily issued from the press?" We need only say in reply, that the books are all wrapped up in a page of biology; the butcher, the brewer, the manufacturer, and the confectioner, our children's camp in a page of conology. Strange that authors have patience to write to what people have none to read.—*Yankee Blade.*

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

ACUSHNET RIVER.

BY H. W. PATTON.

How rich thou art, Acushnet,
In thy morning beauty dressed;
When a landscape so unrivalled,
Is languid on thy banks
There's magic in thy waters,
And the charm is flung o'er me;
I must, I will be idle,
This summer morn, with thee.

How bright thou art, Acushnet,
At midday, when thy waves
Reverberate the royal sunbeam
That comes in to thee; I love!
There's splendor in thy waters,
When the summer sun is high;
I must, I will be idle,
For the scene enchains my eye.

How dear thou art, Acushnet,
When twilight round thee falls;
When the evening sky has paled;
Thou beauty on thy walls
When the white-winged boat is floating
On thy waters, bright and free;
I must, I will be idle,
This twilight hour, with thee.

How sweet thou art, Acushnet,
When the full moon's gentle light
Plays with thy happy waters,
On some star-gemmed summer night.
Then art thou more enchanting
Than the richest dream could be;
I must, I will be idle,
This summer eve, with thee.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

LITTLE BESSIE.

BY HARRIET W. HATHAWAY.

LITTLE BESSIE! not a very dignified title for a matron, but yet we could not have called her anything else had we tried, it would have sounded so strangely out of place, for it was Little Bess, or Bessie, when she was a fair, golden haired babe—Little Bessie, when she went to Ma'am Primrose's school under the old elm, at the top of Snowdon Hill—Little Bessie still when she had become the belle of our village—and even now that she was married, and had left her widowed mother's cottage home, no one thought of her, or spoke of her, save as Little Bessie, therefore, why should we? There was something in her very looks that tempted you to it. The little compact form, the round, rosy face, the laughing-living blue eyes, the golden brown curls, that fell like a cloud about her prettily turned neck and shoulders, seemed all to whisper, "Little Bessie! Little Bessie!" as plainly as though they uttered breathing words. Now that we trust we have reconciled our readers to this—at first blush, apparent breach of decorum, we will to our story.

Little Bessie—now no longer Bessie Brown, but Bessie Brewer—had found her new residence in a pleasant, quiet village, some dozen miles from the home of her girlhood.

A sweet pretty cottage was that in which Frederick Brewer had placed his young wife. A sloping bank led up to the wide, flat doortop, partially overgrown with velvet-like moss, and lovingly did the small, white cottage with its green blinds seem to smile and clamber in the doorway, and columbine, that clung so confidently around it. Then all along under the windows, and around the house, were clumps of lilacs and sweet-brier, daffies and snowdrops, nasturtians with their bright golden yellow blossoms, morning glories supported on slight frames, white and scarlet verbenas, and many more varieties, for Bessie was a dear lover of flowers. At an early hour every morning she might have been seen with her hoe, rake and watering-pot at work among them, her smiling face well nigh hidden in her capacious sun-bonnet, and her hands enmeshed in some cast-off gloves of Frederick's, which reached half way to her elbows. By the by, Bessie had a very pretty little hand, and what seemed rather strange was that though she was mistress of an establishment, and did her own "washing, baking and brewing," still she retained the perfect symmetry; there was the same rose-colored tint, at the tips of the dimpling, tapering fingers, and the nails—which had always been Frederick's admiration—were as faultless as ever. In truth, it was a hand which many a lofty dame might have envied, and we will not pretend to say but Bessie was the least grain in the world proud of it.

It was on a warm, sunshiny summer afternoon that our story commences. The blinds in the parlor were closed and the windows thrown open that there might be a draught of air through the house. This was one of the cozier of little parlors. A soft English carpet covered the floor, a series, dressed in glossy red morris, stood under the south window, a few light cane-seated chairs were disposed tastefully here and there. Over the mantel hung the portraits of her father and mother, protected with coverings of white gauze. The gilt framed mirror had a covering of the same material, and that with the thin muslin curtains that shaded the windows were looked back with pale rose-colored ribbons. Under the glass was a pretty mahogany table on which lay a number of interesting, prettily bound books, and in the centre of it, stood a small astral lamp with a cut-glass shade. On the mantel shelf, were two vases filled with flowers, and a statue of the Madonna executed in marble. The grate was filled with evergreen bough, and the fender that surrounded it was as bright as polished steel. On either side of the fireplace was an ornate hairbrush resting on one of which was a basket of flowers, and on the other a bouquet, wrapped in waxed paper by Bessie's own hands, for though she was decidedly domestic in her turn, still she was possessed of quite a number of accomplishments. But the parlor did not look more pleasant and homelike than did the kitchen, with its green painted floor, sparkling with "white, and varnished so brightly you could almost see your face in it, not a mar or scratch, or particle of dust was there upon it. Here and there lay little nicely braided mats. The wooden-seated chairs were

painted pure white, with gilt stripes, which, by the way, was Bessie's own fancy. On one side of the small room was a small secretary, through whose glass doors were to be seen quite a little library. On the opposite side of the room there lay the "old fashioned Bible on the stand."

It was on this same bright summer's afternoon, that Little Bessie was seated before one of the low windows in her kitchen. On the table at her side, was a glass dish of flowers—there was one in the other window, and two large tumblers of them on the shelf. Indeed, it seemed as if she could not rest until she was surrounded by flowers. All the summer she revelled in their abundance, and when the cool weather drew nigh, she would coax all she could into the house, and then watch and tend them, as carefully as a mother would a delicate infant.

She had often and often wondered why every one called her Little Bessie, and of late she had been slowly coming to the conclusion that it was scarcely dignified enough for a matron. That afternoon as she stood before her mirror, she had asked herself the question more seriously than ever before, and as she gazed upon the reflection of her form and face, the thought suddenly occurred to her, that it might be owing to her allowing those golden brown curls to fall around her neck and shoulders, so like a girl's. With this thought came the recollection, that she would do so no longer. So after a deal of trouble she succeeded in gathering them into her hand, and fastening them in rather an ungainly knot on the back of her head with a small shell comb.

Then going to her wardrobe she selected the plainest dress she could find, and pinned a thick cambric collar closely about her white throat. After completing her toilet, she seated herself at her sewing with a great appreciation of her newly acquired dignities. She was for the time being, no longer Little Bessie, but Mrs. Frederick Brewer! But alas, those little golden brown curls would not brook confinement! So one after another they stole out, and rested lovingly upon her fore-pared, and kissed the roses on her soft downy cheek. Poor, dear little Bessie was Little Bessie still. But her mind was so heavily engaged upon the slippers she was embroidering for her dear Fred, that she did not notice this, and it was not strange, it was so natural like this, that to rest there. Ever and anon her eye would wander to Frederick's arm chair opposite her, and from that to the cricket on which stood a pair of faded looking brown velvet slippers. And then how simply flew her fingers, the laughing-living blue eyes kept coming and going over her face, bringing out in full the half hidden dimples that played around her small, rosy mouth. The bright buds and roses seemed to spring upon the canvass as her touch as though by enchantment. And now the last stitch was taken! Hastily rising she gathered up every little scrap of worsted lest her secret should be discovered, and placed them in the slipper in the work-box, and turning the key she put it in her pocket. Glancing at the little curious clock—which ticked upon the mantel—for the first time for two hours, she discovered to her surprise, that it was fifteen minutes past her usual time for getting tea. She could not bear that Frederick should wait a moment for her supper. In truth it was a thing he had not done since the morning of the wedding. With some trepidation she tucked her sleeves above her elbows, tied on a checkered apron, in whose ample folds she seemed well-nigh lost, and commenced preparations for tea. In less time than it takes us to tell it, a nice fire was crackling and snapping in the clean, bright stove, and the tea-kettle was filled and on. This done, she went into the closet, and dipping some flour into the kneading pan, she took a large skimming dish and removed a portion of the rich cream from one of the pans of milk, which stood on the lower shelf, and added this with the other necessary ingredients to her flour, and in a short time, her biscuits were made and placed in the oven.

Then the table was drawn into the floor, a snowy white cloth placed upon it, the blue stone china was set out on the sideboard, and brought out. Then followed a ball of bright, golden, home-made butter—a glass pitcher of cream, and a bowl of white sugar—to eat upon the tempting strawberries near by them, a loaf of light sponge cake—and a custard pie, whose pale yellowish color and apparently flecked crust had tempted the appetite of an epicure.

White, white, white! the airy steam, as the china was set out on the sideboard, and Bessie hastened to clear the shining tea-pot, and soon the delicious beverage was steeping before the fire, and the biscuits were drawn from the oven, baked a most beautiful brown color, and to appearance light as a bun. All was ready, and it yet wanted five minutes of the time for Frederick to come, and so Bessie went to the mirror to see how she was looking.

"O, my, my! how provoking curls!" she exclaimed. "I'm sure I wish my hair was like other people's. I'll see if I can't fix it!" and as she said this, she dipped her brush into a basin of water, and smoothed it back from her forehead, and once more gathered it in a knot with her comb. Just then she heard the little wicket open, and the next moment her light dress might have been seen glancing through the shrubbery.

"My, Bess! Bess!" exclaimed her husband, as he raised his hands in token of astonishment. "What have you been doing to yourself? Where are your curls? And what have you rigged on that clean dressed dress for, with that old womanish collar pinned so prudishly round your throat? Come, tell me at once!"

"O, my, my! how provoking curls!" she exclaimed. "I'm sure I wish my hair was like other people's. I'll see if I can't fix it!" and as she said this, she dipped her brush into a basin of water, and smoothed it back from her forehead, and once more gathered it in a knot with her comb. Just then she heard the little wicket open, and the next moment her light dress might have been seen glancing through the shrubbery.

"Go on, Mrs. Brewer!" said Frederick, in a tone of mock gravity.

"Now I say, Frederick, you are too bad, to make fun of me! I'm really in great distress about this thing; and if you won't think me foolish, I'll tell you what I was about saying. I've sometimes thought when we were in company with William Worth and Frank Norton's com-

posed and ladylike wives, that you was half ashamed of your little undignified Bessie, so with your consent, I'm going to try to be like them. Now, what makes you laugh so, Fred?"

"Why, Bessie," replied Fred, still laughing, "to think you imagine a long streaked, quaker colored dress, a stiff, starched up collar, and wearing your hair dressed plainly, will make you a Mrs. Worth, or Mrs. Norton. You're little Bessie Brewer, and always will be, and I should not love you half as well were you anything else."

As Frederick said this, he slyly removed the comb from his hair, and down came those golden brown curls falling like a cloud about his blushing face. As she raised her laughing blue eyes suffused with tears to his low, he verily thought he had the most beautiful little wife in all the world, and he gently drew her hand within his, and they entered the house in silence, for Bessie's heart was quite too full of happiness to speak.

And now the tea and the biscuits were placed upon the table, and Bessie bowed her young head reverently, while Frederick drank the blessing of Heaven upon their evening meal, for both of them had sought and found the "pearl of great price."

"Mrs. Brewer," said Frederick, as he passed his cup for the second time, "thank you for another cup of your tea. Bessie I can't say, but I like it! I like it!"

"O, don't, Frederick! Please, don't!" replied Bessie, laughing and blushing. "Now that I know you are satisfied with me, I would rather be Little Bessie Brewer than any one else in the wide world."

That was a pleasant evening we will have, said Bessie, as she seated herself in the rocking-chair by the window, through which the last beams of the golden sunset were stealing. "O, I borrowed the most interesting book of Mrs. Norton this morning, to read," she says. "It's the sweetest story she ever read. Come, sit down, Frederick, and let me commence at once."

"I'm really sorry to disappoint you, Bessie," replied he, hesitatingly, "but I've engaged to meet Silas Gordon at the store, and for once you must excuse me. It's already time I was here," he added, "but I won't stay late. Now don't be unhappy about it, Bessie, there's a good girl."

Frederick Brewer before his marriage had passed the greater part of his evenings at the store of one of his young acquaintances. But since that event he had seldom entered there save on business. Several times he had heard through indirect sources, that his wife held him in "leading strings," and other remarks of the same sort, all of which he thought—and rightly, too—originated at the store. As he did not like they should think this the case, he decided to go for a few times just to convince them to the contrary, though in truth he would have preferred to have remained at home with his wife, and his heart was not quite at ease as he wended his way there.

He sat at the window with her head resting upon her hand. The shadowy twilight stole softly over the earth, and the stars came out one by one until the clear, blue sky was thickly studded with them, and still she sat communing with her own thoughts, which, however, were not his. Suddenly she seemed to bethink herself that it must be getting late, and of this she was assured, as she glanced around the room. With difficulty she groped her way to the fire-place, and lighted her lamp. Then, closing the windows to avoid troublesome insects, she seated herself at her work-table with the book she had borrowed. But it was evident that to her it had no interest. The letters of her mouth twitched convulsively, and the long lashes drooped lower and lower, till they rested like a cloud upon her burning cheek. A tear coursed its way slowly down, and dropped upon the page before her, and this was followed by another, and still another. And now the book was thrown aside, and the young head bowed upon the table, and bitter sobs shook her frame. Poor Little Bessie, was it the dread of some impending evil that oppressed her? But tears brought with them a sense of relief, as they are wont to do. The hand of the clock now pointed to nine. So she rose and bathed her face in cold water, and rearranging her curls, once more resumed her book. By the time Frederick returned she was to all appearances herself again.

"Ah, my house," said Frederick, as he entered the room, "just as I thought—trying to make the best of my absence."

"O, I am so glad you have come!" she exclaimed, as she drew her chair nearer to his side, "for it has been the longest evening I ever passed. You will not leave me again, will you, Frederick?"

"Well now, Bessie, I would not like to promise that," said Frederick, as he drew his bow and put on his old velvet slippers, "and when you come to know a little more of the world you won't expect it. Men cannot consistently devote every moment of their spare time to their wives. It's necessary for a man to keep himself posted up in local affairs, politics and small matters, and this he cannot do if he sits down at home every evening in the week. The more you know of the world, the more you will find I may be absent frequently, but you must not on this account, imagine I love you any the less. Come, say that you think my reasoning good, my sweet little Bessie."

Bessie could not respond to this with her lips, when her heart did not acquiesce, so she simply smiled, and her husband seeing that the subject was painful to her, changed the conversation.

The next day after she had done her morning's work she took the slippers she had been embroidering to Mr. Green to get them soled. "You must have them done without fail by four this afternoon, Mr. Green, and if you tell any one who they're for, I shall not let you into my confidence again."

"I'm sure for keeping a secret, ma'am!" replied the shoemaker, with a smile, and a knowing shake of the head. "By the by," he continued, "if 'twill be any accommodation, I'll send my boy down with them." Bessie accepted the kind offer, and then with a heart pulsating lightly, she bent her steps homeward.

According to promise the slippers came, and as Bessie examined them, she thought them perfect loves of slippers, and so indeed, they were. She could scarcely wait for tea time, but at last it came, and with it came Frederick. He was rather abstracted during tea, still Bessie did not mind it much, for she was thinking of the pleasant surprise in store for him. But alas, for her air-castle! He left her with less ceremony than the previous evening, and now poor Little Bessie felt well nigh heart-broken.

The next day rolled by, and she says, "To-night he will surely stop at home." But he did not, and the next evening, and the next was the same. She put the slippers out of sight, for she had no heart to offer them, now that things were so sadly changed. Still she wore a smiling face, and Frederick had no idea of the sorrow that filled the bosom of his young wife. This was the first clock that had settled upon Bessie's matrimonial horizon, and every day it gathered deeper blackness. She saw not even enjoyed Frederick's company, save on a Sabbath evening. Yet like a true woman as she was, she kept all her troubles sacredly in her bosom. Not even to her own mother did she breathe them. But amid all her loneliness, she felt there was one who looked upon her, and pitied her in her husband's distress. She needed not to tell him her tale of sorrow, for it was known to him, and often had she received the oil of consolation into her wounded spirit, while pleading his promises.

As the summer days wore away, and the autumn came on, there was evidently a change coming over Frederick. His Bible was neglected, his family altar broken down, and Bessie had come to a painful resolution, and she said, "My husband was fast becoming a nuisance. O, what bitter, burning agony was there in this thought! Though he was still the same kind, attentive and affectionate husband, she trembled for him. Something must be done to save him, but what that something was she could not tell. He had no idea of his danger. Already was he circling round the outer ring of the charmed circle, and was rapidly nearing the second, but he was totally unconscious of it.

Three months have flown by, and once more we will look in upon Bessie. It was a cold, chilly evening, and she was seated alone before the stove, in which a bright fire was burning. Her face had lost somewhat of its happy, smiling expression, and the roses had faded a little from her cheek, but still she was the same sweet, child-like-looking Little Bessie. There she sat patiently watching, and awaiting the return of Frederick. The clock had sounded four eleven, and now it vibrated to the hour of twelve. A cry of anguish escaped Bessie's lips. Where could he be? He had never been so late from home before. Bitter thoughts were at work in her heart. Her hands were clasped tightly over her breast to still its tumultuous throbbing. "O, God!" she murmured, "if he should be come a—!" the burning word died upon her lips, and tears came to her relief.

She was not kept much longer in suspense, for soon Frederick came.

"What!" he exclaimed, "you up yet, my dear little Bessie; and you've been crying, too! I presume, while I was away, I was not here, and I should have been much more uneasy than I was, had I not imagined you in the 'land of dreams' long ago."

Poor Bessie was quite overcome by his kindness, and her head sank sobbing on his breast; but it could not rest there long without inhaling the scent of the "wine-cup." Frederick Brewer heard his wife sobbing, and he rose, and he resolved in his heart that henceforth he would be more careful of her happiness. With all his defects, he was still the noble and generous-hearted Frederick Brewer of other days. Gladly would he have broken from the influences that were strengthening around him, but he knew not how to begin. It seemed to him that he was led along by some unseen mysterious influence. Heaven help him!

The next morning Bessie rose from her bed leaving Frederick sleeping heavily upon his pillow. Dressing herself quietly, she stole out into the kitchen, closing the door softly behind her. The air was keen and frosty without, but the golden sunshine came cheerily in at the low windows which were now filled with rows of flower-pots. Here was a "lady's ear-drop" in full bloom, there a scarlet verbenas and a thrifty rose-bush covered with the sweets of half-blown roses and buds. Very smiling and pretty did Bessie look as she paused for a moment to admire her favorites. Indeed it seemed to her like being in the midst of a miniature summer.

"O, what a pleasant home is mine!" she murmured. "There is but one thing wanting to render me as happy as I am now, Frederick! dear-dear Frederick!" she continued, while a tear fell upon the flower over which she was bending, "what would I give to see him as he once was! O, my Father in heaven, grant me this one request of my heart!"

It was evident that her thoughts were becoming more and more painful, but the remembrance of her unperformed duties came to mind, and now, with usual energy she commenced her preparations for their morning meal. Soon the coffee was sending forth its tempting odor, the ham was fried and the nicely cut slices laid in a platter to await the coming of the eggs, which

were already sizzling and spluttering in the pan. The basin of smoking brown bread had been drawn from the oven, and Bessie was putting the finishing touch upon the table, when Frederick made his appearance, married, until now.

"Why, my little Bessie, what does all this mean?" said he, gazing with surprise about him. "Well, you see, Frederick," replied she, "you were sleeping so soundly I had not the heart to wake you, and besides I thought for once I would like to see how it would seem to make the fire and all. You know it's a thing I've not done since we were married, until now."

Frederick smoothed back those clustering golden brown curls and imprinted a kiss upon the snowy forehead, saying, "I really think, Bessie, that I've the dearest little wife in all the world."

There was a laughing light in her soft blue eyes, as she raised them confidently to his face, but they fell in a moment and the roses fled from her cheek. There was something in their expression and in the livid color around them, so unnatural, that it sent the warm blood coldly back upon her heart. Poor—poor Bessie!

"Why, Bessie, dear! what ails you? You are as white as marble. Are you sick?"

"I did feel a little unwell, but I'm better now," replied she, as she seated herself at the table. "In a few moments she was chatting and laughing quite like her usual self."

"I'll tell you what I've been thinking of, Frederick," said she, as she turned some of the rich yellow cream into his cup for the second time, preparatory to receiving the coffee. "It was that I should like to spend one evening at the store with you. I'm so tired of staying at home alone."

"Well now, Bessie," replied Frederick, laughing till he made his nose red, "if that's the last request! But you shall go this evening, and every other evening that suits you."

"And you'll not say a word to oppose me?" interposed Bessie.

"Not a word, upon my honor, little Bessie Brewer! But I shall be obliged if I'm not off this minute. So good-by."

"Good-by," replied Bessie, with a half abstracted air.

Once or twice during the forenoon, the thought of Bessie's request occurred to him, but by noon the circumstance was entirely forgotten.

'Twas evening, and Bessie was seated alone in her kitchen before the stove, in which the fire was burning brightly. Everything around wore an air of cheerful, quiet comfort. But it was plainly evident that her mind was ill at ease. Ever and anon her eye would glance toward the door with a hurried, nervous expression. The hands of the clock already pointed to eight, and as she became aware of it, she murmured: "It is plain enough Frederick has gone to the store, and now that my mind is made up, I will follow him, at whatever great a sacrifice of feeling."

Hastily donning her dusty little straw hat and her thick shawl, she left the house, fastening the door behind her, and the next moment was walking briskly down the frozen street. But as she neared the store, her steps seemed to fall slower and more heavily. And now she had reached it—but her courage had died out. What was to be done? Summoning all her resolution, she opened the door and entered. For a moment she stood bewildered at the sight of so many strange faces.

"What will you be helped to, madam?" said the shopkeeper, stepping briskly before the counter, and denoting one of his most bewitching smiles. "Ah, Mrs. Brewer!" he exclaimed, as his eye met her's. "Happy to see you, Mrs. Brewer. What shall I help you to?" "Not anything, thank you," said Bessie, with an effort at self-composure, and seating herself on the high wooden bench by the side of her husband. How strangely she looked sitting there! Frederick seemed a perfect blank. Where had vanished all the wit of their conversation? One or two ventured a remark in an embarrassed and hesitating tone; gradually the silence grew intolerable, and so one after another the young matrons stole out, and at last Frederick was left alone by the side of his little Bessie. The shopkeeper looked as though he would like to have the mystery explained, but Frederick rose, and drawing Bessie's arm within his own, he departed without enlightening him.

One year had passed. 'Twas evening; and the room wore the same cheerful look as of old. The lamp was burning upon the table, by the side of which Bessie was now seated. But she was not alone to night, for before the blazing fire sat Frederick in his arm chair. His feet rested on a cricket, and the buds and roses on his slippers glowed in beauty in the fire-light.

"Come, Bessie," said Frederick, "lay aside your book. I want to ask what you were smiling about a moment ago? I know it was nothing you were reading, for your eyes were bent on the carpet."

"Well, I suppose I must tell," replied Bessie, with a sunny smile. "I was contrasting how differently we were situated one year ago. One year ago to night, I passed the evening with you at Draper's store. I can never tell what I suffered that evening. What an appearance your little Bess made, sitting there on that high bench in her hat and shawl, not even daring to look up and meet the staring eyes bent on her. That was a dark day to me, Frederick; but how many bright days have followed it! But come, you haven't told me how you like your slippers."

"Well, I should think I'd ought to like them pretty well," said he, "I had to do a year's penance before obtaining them. I really think them very nice. O, Bessie, what, under God, do I not owe to you! The night you came to Draper's store, was an eventful one for us both. While sitting there, I could feel how great was the love that could induce you to seek me there; and all the while I was writing bitter things against myself. I resolved henceforth to be worthy of that love. Your timely effort saved your devoted Frederick from becoming a drunkard. I had spoken the word that died on Bessie's lips."

Bessie looked up, smiling through her tears, and said, "Desperate cases require desperate remedies."

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]
TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

BY E. J. HARRIS.

Dear, distant friend, though far away,
My thoughts to thee will often stray;
Since thou no more canst roam with me
Beneath the shady grove and tree—
Where we have sat and listened long
To catch the wild-bird's simple song;
As gently mid the leafy bowers,
He whistled away his summer hours.

Those radiant joys so quickly past,
Were all too bright, too dear to last;
And on I sigh, but sigh in vain
That they can never be again.

O, couldst thou for a moment, know
How sad I feel when I think so;
How sad those shadowed walks have grown,
Since I must tread them now, alone—
They would not wonder, that I mourn
The days that never can return.

In those loved paths around my home,
No longer now I wish to roam;
Since thou, whose presence made them dear
In former hours, no more art here.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]
THE PRIMA DONNA.

BY M. V. ST. LEON.

CHAPTER I.

"Then hast wept, and thou hast parted,
Thou hast been a wanderer long;
Thou hast watched for him that never came,
I know it by the song."

"What is to be done?" exclaimed the manager of the principal theatre in Havana. "What is to be done?" and he paced the room in angry despair. "This is the second time in a week that Signora Buonatti has been too ill to sing—and to-night every seat is engaged, the house will be full to overflowing. The audience scarce endures the first disappointment, and how will they receive the second? O, for some expedient. I must hunt the whole city through till I find some one to supply her place decently!" and seizing his hat, Diego Carrillos rushed into the street, and was out of sight in a few minutes.

"Alfin brillar, nell' arte," sang a voice of surpassing sweetness, which came from round a corner. Carrillos stopped an instant in silent ecstasy, and then hurriedly advanced in the direction of the sound. In front of a handsome house stood a young girl apparently near sixteen years of age, in poor but clean garments, and holding a mandoline in her hand with which she was playing an accompaniment to the words she was singing. The manager stood listening to it attentively, and the rich, clear tones of the girl drew on the lower notes, or rose with a delicate gush to the higher ones, he could scarce restrain some display of his delight. Such, however, it was not his policy to exhibit, and when at the close of the song, she timidly approached him, and lifting her mandoline and large, sad eyes at the same time, besought him in broken Spanish to give her a single maravedi for play's sake, he coldly drew forth a few small coins and handed them to her, saying:

"This is a poor way of earning your support."

"I know it—but it is all I have."

"It is a pity, for you seem to be an honest sort of a body, and perhaps with the assistance of friends you might be made something decent," then without noticing the indignation flash that risen to her cheek, he continued: "Now I am willing to help you—that is, if you're respectable and humble-minded, and I will let you sing in my theatre, although I am sure I shall lose by it."

The first impulse of the young girl was to refuse with anger, the proposal offered almost in an insulting manner, by the hard, avaricious man, but a moment's reflection showed her she could not afford to be particular in choosing the manner of an employer, and she replied:

"Why are you willing to take a stranger who has no claims upon you, if you are certain you will be a loser by so doing?"

"Because, although I shall be at an extra expense for a while, I am in hopes you will repay it sometime," he replied, with a scowl at being questioned. "Come, what say you?"

"I am willing to better my condition, sir, and as for being humble in my manners, few are otherwise who have their living to earn," replied the maiden, with a touch of haughtiness.

"Then come with me," said Carrillos, leading the way to the house he had quitted a short time previous. When they were seated, the manager commenced questioning his companion.

"It is rather a singular, thing for a street musician to sing such songs as you do, and in such a manner,"—then, after a pause, during which she did not volunteer any information on the subject, he renewed the attack, with, "You must have had some instruction. Who was your teacher?"

"A countryman," was the reply.

Baffled in this direction, Carrillos commenced in a fresh quarter.

"You are an Italian, I suppose?"

"I am."

"Of what part are you a native?"

"Before I came to Havana, I resided in Naples."

The manager bit his lip at the small amount of information he obtained, and commenced again.

"One of the troupe is ill, and I wish to obtain some one to supply her place—but I suppose you are unacquainted with any opera?"

"I will engage to perfect myself in any one within a week."

"I cannot wait so long. To-night is the evening I most desire your services," Carrillos replied, in despair.

"What is announced in the programme?"

"Lucia," was the gloomy response.

"If that is all, sir, I ask but seven hours practice and study. I am familiar with it, but need instruction in the setting of it."

Her companion eagerly replied that he would engage her for that night at least, and was de-

parting to send some one to instruct her, when she timidly inquired:

"But my dress, sir—how shall I arrange that matter?"

"Oh, I'll see to that! You prepare yourself in the part—I'll do the rest," and he was gone in an instant.

Night came, and also a crowded house. Presently the people became impatient, and with eagerness called for the commencement of the performance; at the expiration of five minutes whistling, screaming, stamping, etc., the manager made his appearance and announced "that Signora Buonatti was unable to appear, but Signorina Zampieri had kindly offered to take her place!" But the audience did not take it kindly—the lady was unknown to them, and who could say anything about her singing—besides, they had excused the favorite vocalist once, and they were not to be put off in this same way again. Accordingly, a tremendous uproar, in the midst of which the unfortunate manager rattled off the physician's certificate, letting his voice drop, and flung away towards the end most comically, then hastily departed for the side scenes.

In a few minutes the young debutante appeared. She was received with a chilling silence, broken only by a few faint claps from some half dozen good-natured persons, in consideration of her youth and beauty. In defiance of her prepossessing appearance, the audience seemed determined that they would not be cheated or flattered into a single expression of approbation, but the manager observed with rising hope that they forbore to hiss. Undiminished, and regardless of the reception she met with, the young girl, with perfect composure, began her role. As she commenced, the whole richness and beauty of her voice were brought out, and wholly unable to withstand such wonderful, unexpected melody, the people manifested their delight loudly, and at the conclusion of the opera, Signorina Zampieri was called for loudly. At the request of the manager, she came forward, and with polite indifference bowed in reply to the applause. Signora Buonatti was forgotten! The people were amazed at the nonchalant manner of the young favorite, who actually received a burst of enthusiasm, such as rarely had greeted any singer, with such coolness—who and what was this slender, youthful being, that was neither awed by their sternness, nor delighted at their praises?

The selfish, scheming Carrillos at once perceived he made a fortunate speculation, and hastened to engage his prize for a year at one third her real value, as the next day proved, when notes came flocking in from all directions, urging her to name her own price. With a feeling of deep indignation Teresa Zampieri departed, that he should never acquire another farthing by her. She speedily became the pet of the people, and her sweet, melodious, surprising good fortune, nothing had the power to charm her out of the subdued manner so unnatural in one so young, or throw a lightsome sparkle into those large, dark, melancholy eyes, while almost the first exclamation made by every one on hearing her sing was, "Her voice sounds like a fountain of tears!" The only thing that absorbed and rendered her forgetful of the present, was her music, and when in the opera, her whole being seemed merged into the character she was representing. Her large, sad eyes grew still larger and sadder, and she seemed like one in a dream—it was with her a passion, an existence.

But she was subject to many annoyances from Carrillos, who constantly took advantage of her ignorance concerning money matters, which her music, and when in the opera, her whole being seemed merged into the character she was representing. Her large, sad eyes grew still larger and sadder, and she seemed like one in a dream—it was with her a passion, an existence. But she was subject to many annoyances from Carrillos, who constantly took advantage of her ignorance concerning money matters, which her music, and when in the opera, her whole being seemed merged into the character she was representing. Her large, sad eyes grew still larger and sadder, and she seemed like one in a dream—it was with her a passion, an existence. But she was subject to many annoyances from Carrillos, who constantly took advantage of her ignorance concerning money matters, which her music, and when in the opera, her whole being seemed merged into the character she was representing. Her large, sad eyes grew still larger and sadder, and she seemed like one in a dream—it was with her a passion, an existence.

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poverty and comparative obscurity were the objections to him, determined they should not long remain a barrier, and immediately on the expiration of his engagement with Carrillos, departed for his native land, determined not to let Signora Zampieri again till he had won a name worthy her acceptance. He mentioned his plans to no one, however, but bidding farewell to his friends departed on his errand.

CHAPTER II.

Time flew by, and Teresa was released from her engagement. Carrillos begged earnestly that she would continue with him, but the young girl told him just her sentiments regarding his conduct, and much as he regretted his past error, it did not help the matter in the least. Engagements from far and near poured in upon her, and the only difficulty was, which to choose.

"Somewhat of contrast!" thought Teresa. "One short year ago, I scarce knew where to lay my head. Heigho! Methinks my present state elevated as it may appear—but what is this foolish heart forever crying 'more'?" and the tears seldom permitted to visit those sad, dreamy eyes, now came unchecked. Her sorrow once indulged, returned more and more often; so to divert her mind, Teresa Zampieri visited distant countries, always avoiding Italy, however, and journeys and sang without cessation. This constant exertion was too much for her to bear, and she was obliged to omit singing entirely for several months, during which time she travelled through many delightful places, and frequently recalled those days in after years, as some of the happiest she had known.

At the expiration of her wanderings she returned to Havana refreshed, and comparatively happy, to commence a new engagement. This was the third year of her theatrical life, and Teresa was now nearly twenty years of age, and though so young, she possessed the manners of an accomplished, experienced woman. It was a matter of wonder to all, that amid such a throng of suitors she was known to possess, she yet remained Teresa Zampieri; but few dared request the guardianship of the peerless girl, for it seemed as though between her and herself a vast gulf lay. And notwithstanding superior rank and position, many a noble felt himself awed by the unaffected dignity of the actress.

One evening as the breathless multitude were listening to the soft, high note the songstress had just sustained for several minutes, as her eyes suddenly rested on a figure in a box near the stage, it was interrupted by a wild, piercing shriek from the blanched lips of Teresa, who instantly fell senseless. In a second all was confusion. The orchestra stopped short in the middle of a note, the curtain was speedily lowered, several ladies fainting, and the audience were in a fever of excitement, each one talking to his neighbor.

"We must be careful of our treasure," said one, "or we shall lose it."

"What is the matter?" eagerly asked another.

"That last note was held too long," suggested a third.

"A touch of the heart complaint I should think," etc.

The manager announced that Signorina Zampieri requested the indulgence of a few minutes before resuming her performance, there was a general expostulation, so much had she endeared herself to every heart. But the manager assured the audience that the lady thanked them for their considerate kindness, but that she was perfectly recovered, and preferred finishing the little that remained of the opera. When she resumed the performance, she sang with a loud, clear, and brilliant voice, and the audience, who had been so much affected by the first performance, were now so much interested in the part she was representing. The stranger at first turned pale with anger and surprise at the surpassing delineation, but the next instant his eyes gleamed with malicious satisfaction, which seemed to chafe the spirit of madness.

At the conclusion of the opera, Teresa, with feverish impatience to arrive at home, was hastily leaving the theatre, when she chanced to see the saw in the front entrance doorway that Mephistopheles-like face, and ordering the coachman to drive to her lodgings as speedily as possible, threw herself back upon the cushions, and expressed a strong inclination to take a certain individual's life out of the hands of Fate. In a few minutes she arrived at the hotel, and entering her parlor stood face to face with the stranger, who had risen with the most easy coolness, and advanced to meet her.

"Mille pardons m'enie, for the intrusion, but I have not seen you so long, that I was quite unable to resist the temptation of a call."

Teresa, overpowered with the most painful emotions, sank into a seat and covered her face with her hands. With an expression of savage pleasure, her tormentor approached quite near, and said:

"I beg, my charming friend, that you will not put yourself to the fatigue and trouble of a sentimental reception, for I assure you it will be entirely wasted."

These words roused the young girl from her state of agony, and raising her face to its full height, she exclaimed:

"Benedict Villani! would appear that the just avenging God hath forgotten thee miserable slaver, but it matters not; eternally, methinks, will be long enough for thy punishment." Then with less passion, but with regal, even awful dignity, she freezingly inquired—"What have you to say?"

For an instant the wretch was intimidated, but noticing the tremor of Teresa's whole frame, and seeing that she was not to be trifled with, he turned scorn, he regained his assurance and tauntingly replied:

"It is a trifling oversight, *ma chere*, to affect a

callous indifference towards me, when I have the charm with a single glance to render you insensible, and to make you tremble at the mere sound of my voice—no, no, Teresa, it will not do. I tell you, for your own sake, I know the power to fascinate has not yet deserted me."

"Contempestuous wretch! With what feelings does the scaly, venomous serpent inspire one when he approaches with slimy track and fetid breath, with stealthy coil and sickening glare? Think you would not that fascinate with terror, cause a tremble of disgust, and produce insensibility and delirium that such a loathsome reptile should exist and breathe the same air? Yet having now called forth that emotion in its deepest degree, you rejoice to have moved me! Truly you have, and I can conceive your mind just fitted to appreciate the honor!"

The worst passions of Villani were now thoroughly awake, and he retorted with flashing eyes and a fierce tone, while his face even to his lips, turned livid white.

"You may regret your liberal use of words when I unfold my grand. I will trouble you for half your proceeds for the last year!"

With blazing eyes, from which sparks of fire actually seemed to flash, and a form that appeared to dilate, Teresa turned full upon Villani.

"How now, traitorous villain! Is not your list of perjuries, thefts, deceptions, and murders long enough, but you must add to it, ere you are qualified to become the privy councillor to the arch fiend? Get thee hence, grovelling worm, ere the lightnings of heaven blast thee!"

At this instant the storm which had been gathering, burst with fury over the city, and the dazzling sheet of flame was succeeded by a deafening, rattling peal of thunder. Teresa sank on her knees beside a lounge and buried her face in silent prayer; even Villani turned pale and moved to the centre of the apartment, where he stood with folded arms and compressed lips. Presently the violence of the tempest abated, and the pallid Brandini approached Teresa, who had not changed her position, and had forgotten in the storm almost the existence of her persecutor, and in a low, dogged voice, said:

"I am waiting for your reply."

With a faint shriek Teresa raised her head.

"I thought you were gone—do you wish to tempt me farther?"

"Will you give me the money?"

"I will not!"

"Beware! Think again!"

"You have my answer. Never, while life remains, will I comply with your reply!"

Villani bent over her and whispered a word; with a wild, agonized shriek she sprang to her feet and gazed wildly into his face and in feeble, broken accents, exclaimed:

"O no, no, not that—it would kill me, Villani, Villani! You are not in earnest?"

"I most certainly am, madam, and I give you just five minutes to decide which alternative you will choose."

She justly gazed upon it. At the expiration of that time, Teresa, with a pale, tearful face, knelt before him, and in faint, despairing tones, murmured:

"I accept your terms! Villani's eyes lighted up with a fierce pride, as he exclaimed:

"I thought to bring you to terms!"

"Tempt me not, Brandini Villani!" vehemently cried Teresa, rising with flashing eyes;

"you may rouse me yet beyond endurance—beware!" and she pressed her hand to her heart, while an expression of pain crossed her countenance. The extreme physical suffering so plainly marked, seemed to move even the hard, unfeeling Villani, who, after he had said:

"I am afraid you are, *ma bella*, then as he gazed upon her lovely face, and half affectionately, half in defiance, he suddenly exclaimed:

"O Teresa, you're the handsomest woman I have ever saw. I could love you so, if you'd let me. Why can't we be friends, Teresa? I know I did wrong, but why need we make an eternal quarrel of the matter. Ah, my charming prize, why not transfer to me the affection you are wasting upon one, who, perhaps ere this, is false to you, and dead?"

"Silence! I have borne too long with you from weakness and inability to speak, but depart now, or I recant my promise of submission."

"To hear is to obey—though the request might have been couched in more polite terms," returned Villani, his former cold, sarcastic manner returning with every word he uttered.

"I may do myself the pleasure to call again, my love—at present I will not do a good night and pleasant dreams—of me!" and the door closed on his sardonic smile.

"Alas," exclaimed Teresa, "he has a hold upon me I dare not attempt to dispute."

The next morning as she was leaving the stage, after rehearsal, she was met at the green room door by a familiar face, fine, manly and handsome—yes, it was Gerardi! With a glad cry of surprise and delight, Teresa sprang forward, and taking the outstretched hand of the young man, said in her joyous, musical voice:

"Welcome, my dear friend! How you have improved—I have heard of the laurels you have won!"

"And you too, Signorina Zampieri—you are paler and thinner than you were when I last saw you. I hope you have preserved as well as myself, for Fame has been idle with your name."

"Really signor, we are exquisitely polite and complimentary to each other, but this is hardly the place for a lengthy conversation," said Teresa, laughing, and coloring somewhat, as she met the slightly mischievous glances of the loquacious geny who are to be found in theatres—

"If you would let us in, why not step into the carriage, and drive home with me?"

"I shall be most happy," replied Gerardi, with a radiant, delighted smile, as he accompanied her to the vehicle.

For some time the presence and vivacity of Gerardi roused Teresa from her serious, almost melancholy manner, and the wise one looked merrily and said—"That old always thought it would come to something."

At last Gerardi did what every one was expecting him to; for finding Teresa alone one

morning, he again offered himself with far better hopes and prospects than he had three years ago. To his infinite amazement, the color fled from Teresa's cheek, and covering her face with her hands, she hid her eyes from him. I know the power to fascinate has not yet deserted me," he said, quite at a loss to interpret the nature of this emotion, surprised at its excess in one so generally self-possessed, and at what course to pursue, but at length said, in a low tone:

"May I hope?"

"Hope!" repeated Teresa, in a bitter tone—

"what have I or any connection with me to do with that word. O Mary mother, help me—help me!" she wailed in a fresh agony as her whole frame trembled with emotion.

Gerardi knew not what to say; with any other person he would have endeavored to soothe and discover the cause of this grief, but the agitation of Teresa was so fearful, and in her so unnatural, that he dared not question; he therefore did the next best thing, which was to keep silent. In a few minutes the storm had exhausted itself, and with sternly composed features she rose and addressed Gerardi.

"Forget this! It is seldom my feelings obtain such mastery over me, but my dark fate occurred so vividly to my mind, that it quite overpowered me."

"Why not renounce it then? I would strive so earnestly to make a brighter one of your life."

After a moment's hesitation, she seemed to conquer some inward strife, and said, in a low voice:

"I had thought never to have told it to any human being, but you are entitled to an explanation, and here you are too honorable to expose me—Florina," here her face was averted—"Florina, I love another!"

For an instant Gerardi remained without motion, then darting forward he seized her hand, imprinted one despairing kiss upon it, and without a word, was gone.

Teresa wrung her hands and exclaimed—

"Villani, Villani! Could you know what I suffer, even your hard heart would pity me!"

CHAPTER III.

The afternoon dragged heavily along, and evening was approaching, when a knock at the door aroused Teresa from a restless reverie. Bidding the person enter, she beheld Villani, who seated himself by her side, and informed her that he had something to propose which might please her. Teresa wondering what it could be, begged him to proceed.

"I sincerely regret the compact I obliged you to make, and now wish to destroy it."

Teresa looked at him in undisguised astonishment. "I do not think I understand you—is it your wish that I should enjoy the whole of the proceeds of my singing?"

"You have said it."

"I have said it, but I do not make a return?" she inquired, as though suspicious some greater enormity than he had yet been guilty of, was intended.

"What return? O Teresa, cannot you comprehend and believe, that I expect and desire none?"

"I know not how I should, since your whole conduct has hardly been such as to impress me very profoundly with the idea that generosity is a prominent characteristic of Signor Villani's."

"Say no more—let us be friends, Teresa. I will do all I can for you, and do not utter reproaches for what is a misfortune to me, although it were a glory to any other."

His companion scarce credited her senses. Was it possible that Villani, her tormentor and cruel persecutor, should wish her well and desired to become her friend? It seemed strange, yet his manner was more like truth than she had ever seen it before, and she felt she had, perhaps wronged him, that beneath all, a heart, human and accessible to some generous emotion, yet beat, and her own noble, ingenuous nature, ever ready to accuse itself of any offence, impelled her to extend both hands to Villani and reply:

"Pardon me, I have wronged you—it is indeed worse than foolish to cherish animosity toward each other, and henceforth let us not forget we are of one great family, equally cared for by our heavenly Father!"

Villani took Teresa's hands, and kissing them, thanked her so warmly and earnestly that she could not doubt his sincerity, and though she was very far from being the idea that generosity is a prominent characteristic of Signor Villani's."

"Say no more—let us be friends, Teresa. I will do all I can for you, and do not utter reproaches for what is a misfortune to me, although it were a glory to any other."

His companion scarce credited her senses. Was it possible that Villani, her tormentor and cruel persecutor, should wish her well and desired to become her friend? It seemed strange, yet his manner was more like truth than she had ever seen it before, and she felt she had, perhaps wronged him, that beneath all, a heart, human and accessible to some generous emotion, yet beat, and her own noble, ingenuous nature, ever ready to accuse itself of any offence, impelled her to extend both hands to Villani and reply:

"Pardon me, I have wronged you—it is indeed worse than foolish to cherish animosity toward each other, and henceforth let us not forget we are of one great family, equally cared for by our heavenly Father!"

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The image that met Teresa's glance was majestic, with a regal expression of countenance. A broad, but not too high brow, eyes dark as a raven's wing—no, they are only deep, golden brown, yet the long lashes and eyebrows of jet, together with the ever dilating pupil, give the impression that they are darker, a complexion of sunny olive, and locks which are certainly the hue of night, all from the front, and of perfect symmetry, from the exquisite head of the slippered foot, stood before her. Surely it was not a vision from which my lady had caused to turn in vexation, yet with an expression of scorn, and a bright flash apparently of shame, mounting to her cheeks, she impatiently moved away, and commenced braiding up the rich tresses. Throwing a mantle on her shoulders, she descended to the carriage and was soon at the open house.

During the evening, in the midst of the performance, Teresa's eye lit for the first time on the nearest stage box. A mist overspread her eyes, her breath came hot and thick, a dizzy sense of overpowering fulness stole upon her, and when the time came for her response, she had hardly the strength to perform her part; yet the audience was so well, that her emotion was unnoticed. The person who caused this wild tumult in Teresa's frame, was a stately, handsome man, evidently of high birth, and apparently forty-five years of age, although the raven curls around the high, majestic brow were untouched by time. The slightly aquiline features, and dark, flashing eyes, revealed the lofty spirit within, which was softened, however, by the look of sorrow around the mouth, and the general expression of a settled grief. He was dressed in black, relieved by a brilliant and splendid order on the left breast, and unaccompanied, save by a servant in white and gold livery.

The nobleman, for such his appearance declared him, was evidently a stranger in the city, for every glass was leveled at him, but he seemed quite unconscious, and wholly indifferent. At the conclusion of the opera, rounded from his languor by the thrilling manner in which Teresa rendered the last aria, the now animated listener rose and gracefully threw a garland of white lilies with such admirable precision, that they encircled the beautiful head of Teresa; upon which the audience, delighted at the compliment paid in so marked a manner, no less to the well known parity, than the wonderful voice of their favorite, made the theatre ring with their applause.

As soon as possible, Teresa arrived at her own apartments, and throwing herself on her knees, buried her face in the cushions of a lounge, while faint murmurs and sobal sounds broke the stillness. Nearly a quarter of an hour had elapsed, when the opening of the door roused her, and starting up, she beheld Villani stand before her. Villani's moaning him not to advance, she wildly said:

"Forbear! Do not cross that threshold tonight! Villani, I have seen him this very evening—he sat so near I might almost have touched him—so near, and yet not a thought that I was more to him than any other of that crowd! Bear with me for this night—I must alone."

"It shall be as you wish—I will speak of what brought me here some other time, perhaps tomorrow."

"To-morrow let it be then."

Presently Teresa became calmer, yet through the remainder of the night she sat by the open casement without motion or apparent life, thinking over bitter memories without a gleam of hope to illumine the future.

CHAPTER IV.

After Teresa's first agitation had subsided, the stranger's presence seemed to exert a more powerful and calming influence upon her mind. He was seldom absent at her performances, and it seemed to give her an increase of strength as well as happiness; she always received some token of his delight, and many said the Duke di Castiglioni—so he was called—had a very superior taste, and wondered what would come of it. Villani had exacted a promise from Teresa, that she would not permit an introduction to him, and shortly after left the city for a few weeks.

Teresa felt relieved by his absence, although they were no longer enemies, and her mode of life was unchanged. Nearly a fortnight had elapsed, when another incident occurred that changed the whole future of her life. One evening Teresa eagerly sought the familiar face of the foreign nobleman, but in vain, and a disappointed look replaced the smile; but presently he entered the accustomed place, followed by a young man of aristocratic bearing, but no likeness bespoke them to be father and son. Teresa turned pale as marble, but a tear started to her eye as she observed the complete friendship and affection that evidently existed between them, and a thrill of anguish shot through her heart, as she murmured, while her eyes met the young stranger's gaze—"So near—yet so distant!" Several times in the course of the evening she fancied a look of recognition passed over his face, and once, when he touched his companion's arm, her heart leaped to her mouth, but in an instant, perceiving they both glanced at some one on the opposite side of the house, she smiled bitterly, and thought—"How should they know me, in this place, and so altered!"

Late that night when the city was wrapped in slumber, a lamp burned brightly in Teresa's chamber, and a figure paced wildly up and down with clasped hands and flitting hair. At last the restless girl stopped and exclaimed:

"If I am wrong, Heaven help me—but this agony is killing me! If I die, I am silent against, and God judge between us, Villani!"

Then hurriedly, as though fearful her resolution would falter, Teresa drew her writing-desk towards her, and wrote a note rapidly, and with no ostentatious hand, that there was little resemblance to her usual writing, and then sought for sleep—but in vain—and at the earliest possible hour she dispatched a messenger with the note.

Just as the hour of eleven chimed, the door of the room where Teresa sat, was opened, and a servant, announcing Signor Da Vinci, ushered in the young stranger of the preceding night. He advanced with a puzzled, inquiring expression, and with a slightly apologetic bow, said:

"I came in accordance with a request expressed to me by Signorina Zampieri."

"I present to you somewhat surprised, signor, but my motive must be excused. I have a friend in whom you were greatly interested, and who wishes you to be made acquainted with the solution of the mystery which separated her from you."

The gentleman had hitherto been only attentive, but at these last words, an expression of eager inquiry pervaded every feature. Teresa continued:

"This lady, five years ago, was betrothed to Leonardo Da Vinci."

"Myself!"

"I am aware of that fact, but permit me to continue without interruption. Well knowing her father would never consent to her marriage, a plan of elopement was arranged. On the appointed night, the lady, according to agreement, stole to the palace steps, and seeing in the deep shadow a gondola which drew up as she approached, doubted not that the occupant was her lover. She was received, to her belief, in his arms, the light was burning but dimly, and for greater security her companion, who was masked, proposed in a whisper that she should cover her face. She was nearly beside herself with agitation, and when the gondola drew up at a little chapel standing nearly by itself, she unhesitatingly accompanied him, and knelt beside the altar where stood a priest and attendants."

"So absorbed with the various and conflicting emotions in her heart, she uttered the responses mechanically, and when she rose, the chapel was deserted, save by her husband and herself. Turning to him, what was her horror at seeing not Leonardo Da Vinci, as she had supposed, but Villani Brandini, a rejected suitor, and seeming friend to Da Vinci, who had discovered the plan of escape by some means, and revenged himself upon the lady in this manner. In spite of her resistance, she was carried to Brandini's palace, from whence in three days she escaped; and fearing her father would never grant his forgiveness, knowing she was forever separated from the one to whom her heart was given, she managed by the sale of several valuable jewels which she had upon her person at the time of her flight, to procure a passage to Naples, where she hoped to turn her numerous accomplishments to advantage."

"Shortly after her arrival in that place, an American family, who were in need of a governess for two little girls, met with her. Her appearance spoke so strongly in her favor, that notwithstanding the absence of credentials, they engaged her, and in a little while sailed for America. When near the place of their destination, a violent storm arose, and they were shipwrecked. The young girl was washed to a spar, and the last thing she remembered was, being washed overboard by a mountain wave. She was picked up by a merchant vessel bound for Havana. There she arrived in a state of utter destitution, and she who was once the companion of princesses, was obliged to sing in the street for a living, and now—"

"Viola—my long sought love—where, where, is she?"

"She stands before you!" said a thrilling voice, while Teresa, now divested of her disguise, stood with clasped hands, eagerly gazing at Da Vinci, her long, bright golden curls enveloping her as with a veil. In an instant Da Vinci, recovering from his overwhelming surprise, had folded her to his heart. Viola, as we must now call her, after an instant's silence, disengaged herself, saying:

"We must not forget that we can never be more than friends, Leonardo."

"Never more than friends, Viola! Why do you not know that you are free?"

"Free! What is it you mean?"

"Is it possible you still believe yourself Brandini's wife?"

"Believe myself! Am I not?"

"No, my own dearest Viola! It was no priest who performed that ceremony. Two years since, a dying man confessed that for a large sum he had assumed the character of a minister of God, and performed a mock marriage between Brandini and yourself. Your father and I have been seeking you ever since your flight, and at last our dearest wish is granted."

"You are sure he will forgive me?"

"Forgive you! He has sought for you with the blessed hope of clasping you once more in his arms before he died—for years, O Viola, we have all suffered deeply."

"We have, indeed, but now—" a shudder passed over her as she clung closer to Da Vinci, on hearing a quick footstep in the hall. Another moment and Brandini was face to face with Leonardo. We leave the scene that followed to the reader's imagination; the torrent of rage which Villani poured forth, together with the fatigue she had lately undergone, caused Teresa to faint in Da Vinci's arms, when Brandini, finding his villainy was discovered, made a hasty retreat. A message was dispatched for the Duke di Castiglioni, who, in his honor, "Viola" was in his arms, and receiving his full and free pardon.

A week afterward the now united family were leaving Havana, the scene of so much grief and joy. Teresa stood on the steamer's deck, with her husband gazing at the city, when the pilot came on board.

"Quel an affair came off last night," he said to the captain, "an Italian gentleman, Signor Brandini, who ran through a splendid property in his own country and was a spendthrift here, was found dead—blew out his brains—it was supposed to be some love affair that caused it."

Teresa's cheek turned very pale, as she hid her face on Da Vinci's shoulder, who whispered:

"So ends the last scene in the dark drama of thy life. The clouds are passing, and sunshine is over all."

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

TO THE NEWTON MOSQUITOES!

WITH AN APOSTROPHE AS POSSIBLE.

A truce, a truce, ye fly things!

Put up your stings, shut your wings,

And hear your poet!

I'll speak the words of truth, and pause!

If not, yet let some big mosquito

Stand forth, and do it for me!

I'll call for you the sweetest words

Ye beautiful flocks of humming birds,

That will fling!

And while you lounge sweetly along,

Pray, pray, keep quiet all your stings,

For this, they, they, they,

Full off, most lovely I have bitten,

And oft, most angry I have bitten,

With mighty blows;

Though when I laid the former dead,

My sin full fingers came the lead

Whack on my nose!

And this, I've begun the fray;

No, no, I've often run away

Full fast I reckon!

And if you think I fight for fun,

I'll tell you why my mother's pun,

Ye're much mistaken.

There! there's a rascal on my face!

Ye're thick I'll bear such foul disgrace,

Those varlet rudes!

I take that! and half dead, and sprawl,

If I could only hear thee howl,

"Wouldn't you do good?"

My virtue, smothered with the pain,

No more my anger I'll restrain,

No fear your nose!

Villain, I know not what's your mode for,

(Remember what I say I've paid for,

So keep your place,

In self defence the serpent stings,

And then his honest rattle stings

Is warning still!

But ye, blue bottled, and blue eyed,

How we can vent our rightful hate on,

Ye've got your fill!

Then while away, and cry, ye brutes!

Come "follow, follow," like Dr. Freyhu,

Ye get squelched!

And while you stop to chat the myths,

We feel five down weened darts,

Confound your phrases!

Why, one would think some meddling fools

Had taught you in our human schools,

My lords and madams,

Ingratitude belongs to the insect!

And has since Adam's day begun,

Or Mrs. Adams!

There's not a bug, a worm, a fly,

A toad, a spider, flea, that fly,

Ever took to kill!

But of your race I'll venture claim!

For as many more again,

Bring in your bills.

Dye brute, I'm told! Just what a while—

Try me, I'm not so dead mild!

As to its ill!

Talk that! and then the other—

By George! you are a tannal brute,

And must be killed!

A warning now to all you living,

With much forbearance I've been giving,

To start you up in anger!

But since my warning ye despise,

And bite my face and life my eyes,

My gloves I'll do!

And now, ye vile intruders, why

Dye venture here? Say quick, for I

I'll not no longer your eyes,

But every one of you shall die,

Or wish ye kill!

That little one, that little one,

Ever since my song begun.

Has taken ill!

Here come now he's dead as Tray,

And with triumphant joy I say,

I've reeled him right.

But, to a thousand more appear,

With, with my wrath, excite my fear,

For they are sharks!

Sharks with wings upon their feet,

Than those which swim about in seas—

O, how their biting matters!

LARGER BIER.

The question has been often asked what is this beverage, so frequently spoken of in the papers; the New York Journal of Commerce thus answers it:

Lager beer is a malted liquor, originally made in Bavaria, in accordance with the ordinary ale, which is closely related to it in appearance, though differing in taste; of much less specific gravity, weaker, and retaining its foam a shorter time after being drawn. It is made in a sub acid, pungent, and leaves in the mouth a peculiar flavor, caused by a coating of pitch which the insects of the barrels need before being filled. The difference between the modes of brewing lager beer and ordinary ale, is indicated by the etymology of the name, lager—meaning rest—remaining in store; the former requiring to rest in a cool vault from four to six months before it becomes drinkable, while the latter can be used immediately after being emptied from the vats.

In Bavaria, the manufacture is carried on under government inspection, a brewing period being prescribed by law, from 29th September to the 23d April, the festivals of St. Nicholas and St. George. There are of two kinds, one of which retains its flavor only for a day or two; and the beer drinkers of Bavaria, who are very numerous, indulge so capricious and delicate a palate, that when assembled in their beer houses they wait impatiently, if the cask in use be half empty for a fresh one to be tapped. It is said that in well-frequented houses, in this kind, an ordinary cask lasts about an hour.

In effect, it is very moderately exhilarating, but it is very intoxicating properties. Indeed, it is not so indolgent as it is commonly supposed, the enormous quantity consumed would effect and have among the drinkers, it being to unusual occurred for a man to drink a gallon daily, and even more. That it will ever become a favorite beverage with young Americans, however, is not probable, the liking for it not being natural but acquired. If it is drunk for the gratification of the palate, Americans can readily obtain a more delicious draught, and if sought as a means of inducing intoxication or to get up exuberances of spirits, it will be found entirely too low pressure for the purpose, and require too widely distended a stomach for long-term afterwards. Its introduction has also created the necessity for a new article of glass ware, the glasses are of a conical shape, save that they are wider at the base than at the brim, and have a curved ear like the wine bottle, which John G. Gibson expended on his belt on the day of his celebrated "into" of Bell of Edinboro.

To gain an idea of the partiality of the German palate for this beverage, let us consider one of the German restaurants, and he will find that every order for "bavarian malt beverage," "beer," etc., is usually accompanied with the supplement "and six glass lager beer." Upon them it seems to have an eminently soothing and tranquillizing effect, and under its gentle inspiration they grow communicative and eloquent. When, as an illustration of the amount of lager beer the German friends imbibe, we mention that in the little village of Hohenheim, from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty barrels are consumed weekly, it shows plainly what can be done in larger places.

We know of but one large brewery in New York, though the article is made to some extent in Newark; but the great bulk of what is consumed here is brewed from Philadelphia. There are enormous quantities are both brewed and used. In Michigan and Illinois, also, but especially Wisconsin, an immense business is carried on by lager beer brewers, and there may be seen breweries connected on a truly gigantic scale, and which will cost in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000. In price it is worth from \$4.25 to \$5 per barrel, at present somewhat higher; and will soon rise at every point where the German custom prevails, or where German settlers have congregated together.

A GOOD ONE.

William and John occupied separate beds in the same room. John was hungry, but lay. On entering their room to retire for the night, John, with his usual alacrity, undressed and jumped into bed, while William was pulling off his boots and deciding which side of the bed he would most likely prefer the softest.

After a few minutes' rest, William sprang into bed, placed his head upon two pillows, and doubled himself up, preparatory for a comfortable snooze, when what should he discover, when ready to "drop off," but he found a cold, chilly, and the fluid lamp burning. The discovery gave rise to the following soliloquy:

"I want to go to sleep, but I can't get to sleep; it's so very cold that I must make myself to get out on the floor; but still that lamp must be blown out. I wonder if I can't make John get up. I'll try."

"Hello!"

"Did you ever know Daniel Hoskins, foreman of engine thirty and a half?"

"No. Why?"

"Nothing; only I didn't know but that you knew him. I saw by the papers that he had been killed."

"I don't know, but I'll tell you his death was caused, last week, by inhaling the obnoxious fluid vapors from a lamp that he accidentally left burning in the room. After the fluid was all consumed, the chemist said that the fluid portion of the wick so consumed the outgrowth of the lungs, that the fluid vapors suddenly stopped inspiration, and the heart ceased to beat."

John raised himself up in bed, gazed with a sternness indescribable on the reclining form of his room-mate, and in a stentorian voice exclaimed:

"Why, in thunder, don't you blow out that lamp!"

"Well, sure enough," was the reply; "it ain't out, is it? Well, never mind, John, it'll go out itself in a little while."

"No! it won't go out itself in a room where I sleep." And in a twinkling of a car's tail, John had extinguished the light and returned to his bed, muttering, as he did so, "I'd rather get a dozen mice than to see Daniel Hoskins die."

In the morning, John wanted to know all the particulars about the death of Mr. Hoskins. William had no recollection of ever speaking of it, and accused the honest fellow of dreaming—Western Paper.

RENEVOLENCE.

We make much parade about great acts, but often we pass by a great act that in a mere careless way we see. He who gives a cup of water from a right motive, does a great act, intrinsically, though it is a very small one. Our excellent bachelor friend, who laid the three cents in the spade woman's hand, and then waited without waiting for thanks, did as much, perhaps more, as he who donated a college and has monuments. I will not be perturbed by such catastrophes; for Thou art present. Thy word and thy crook inspire delectation.

This apostrophe is a translation from the midst of initial exclamations. Thou perfume my locks with odoriferous unguents; my chalice exuberates.

"Indulgent benignity and commiseration shall continue all the dexterity of my vitality, and I will eternalize my habitude within the metropolis of nature."

Is it not enough to make every man of sense eschew the jargon in which the barbarians of learning too frequently are subsiding for our plain mother tongue?—Melodist Protestant.

ANECDOTES OF ACTORS.

An anecdote is told of Demosell, connected with her performance of Cleopatra, in Marston's tragedy of the same name, which came out in 1750, and was over one of her favorite representations. When preparing for dress, she was a frenzy of passion, she exclaimed:

"I should curse the gods if they restored me back to life!"

An old officer, seated immediately behind, in one of the balcony boxes, was so carried away with the reality of the scene, he struck her violently on the back, exclaiming with great vehemence—

"Infernal set, go to the devil at once!"

This act of extravagance interrupted the performance, and for the moment utterly confounded the actress; who, nevertheless, at the end of the play, thanked the enthusiastic auditor for paying her the highest compliment which the powerful fidelity of her impersonation could thus call forth. It was so with Sandford, who considered himself unsuccessful in a villain, unless intelligible disapprobation was showered upon him; and it has also been said of Cooke, that he looked upon his success as the surest evidence of his excellence as Stukely or Iago. A French audience is much more apt to be subdued by the intensity of an actor, than an English one. In proof of this, innumerable examples might be quoted. On another occasion, when Demosell, as Meropie, was proceeding to order the execution of a man, knowing who he was, a voice from the pit almost inarticulate with sob, cried out:

"Don't kill him—this is my son!"

During a performance of "Britannicus," a grenadier, posted on the stage, after the custom of the time, was so intent on the action of the play, that he forgot his duty. In proof of this, he presented his musket at the actor, and would have shot him dead, had he not been prevented. Previllie, the father of the actor, told us that "The Mercure Galant," when the scenery, placed in the wing, taking him actually for a grenadier, ordered him to fire.

"For heaven's sake, comrade, don't appear in that state, or I shall be sent to the black hole!"—N. Y. Atlas.

FINLAND.

One of the favorite projects of the allied French and English campaign against Russia, is to wrest Finland from Russia, and give it back to Sweden, to whom it is formerly belonged. There is a check the growth of the Russian empire, and it is to prevent Russia from becoming a maritime nation, and keep her shut up in the interior, which is the great aim of England and France. Nearly all the commerce of Russia is carried on by the Finns, who are the only sailors and fishermen of this great empire."

The population of Finland is, we believe, something like a million and a half, and the whole employment of the people is in commerce and the fisheries, and almost the entire marine of Russia, out of the Black Sea, is owned in Finland. It is, consequently, upon Finland that the great rivalry of the Finns and the allied fleet has not only cut off the foreign trade which they enjoyed, but it has annihilated their coastwise trade, and has cut off the source of the great mass of the population depended for a livelihood. Not contented with this, they have added as every undefended and insignificant harbor, burnt all the fishing and coasting vessels there hauled up, and destroyed all the buildings and merchandise, accessible from their boats.

This conduct, if it is not the intention of the English papers, has, as would be naturally supposed, enraged the Finns, as they are called, very much against the British, and the authorities have had much difficulty in restraining them from massacring several parties of English and French sailors and marines, which have fallen into the hands of the Finns, and those marauding expeditions in which the invaders have been beaten off. The latest accounts say that the people of Finland had sent to the Emperor of Russia, that a volunteer force of one man from every house in the country would be ready to embark in a moment, and would be pleased to be engaged against the invaders.—Newburyport Herald.

The first of all virtues is innocence, the next is modesty. If you launch mankind out of the world, he carries away with him half the virtue that is in it.—Spectator.

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